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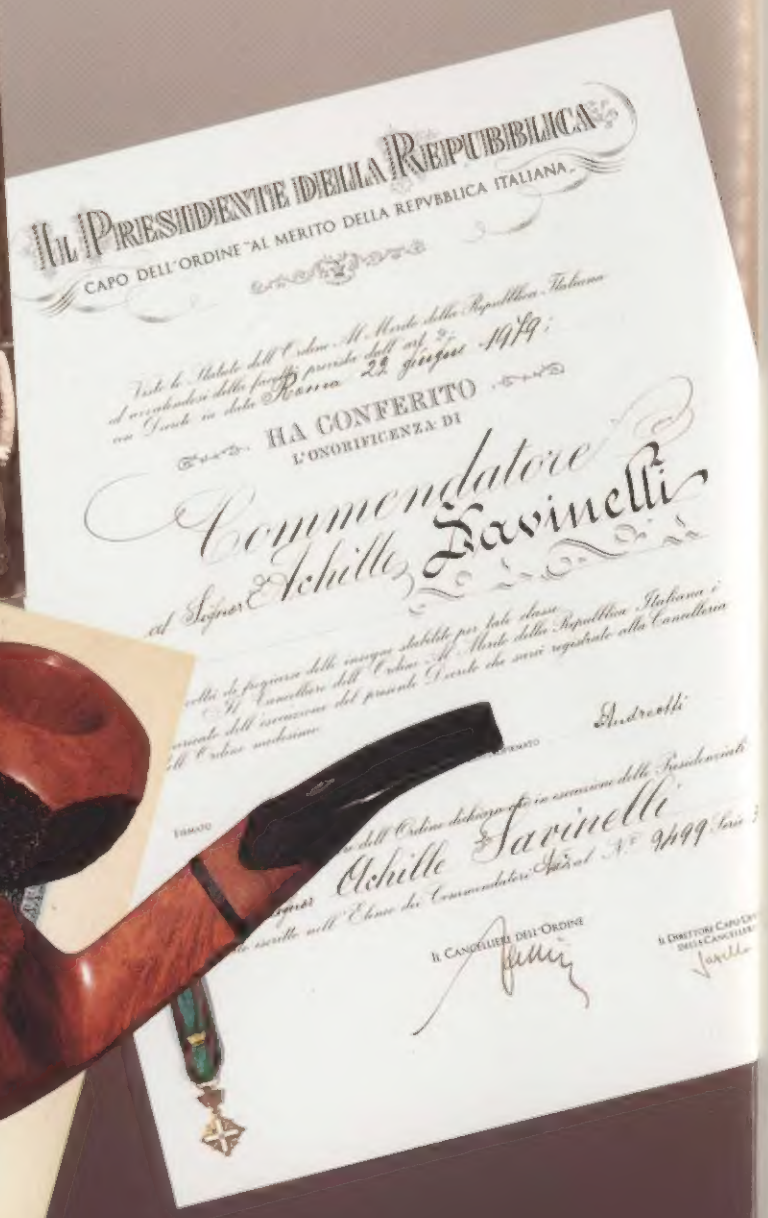

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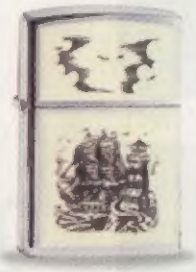

Scrimshaw Ship

Black Matte w/Zippo & Border

Toledo/Medieval Knight

High Polish Chrome Buffalo Head

Solid Brass Manhattan Nights

High Polish Gold Electro Race Car

Blue Marble

Gold & Silver Tryan

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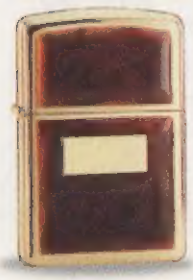

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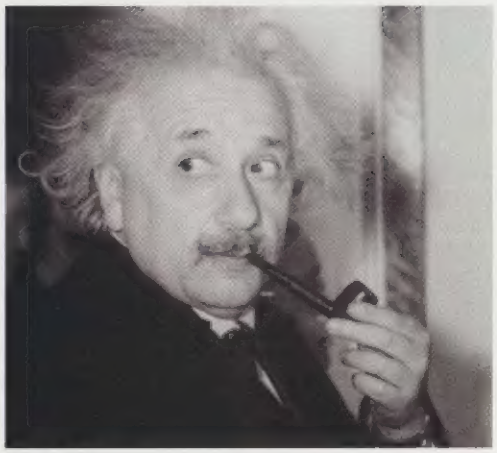

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Pipes AND TOBACCOS

A quarterly magazine celebrating pipes of all kinds and fine tobaccos.

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Postmaster: Send address changes to *Pipes and tobaccos*, 3000 Highwoods Blvd., Suite 300, Raleigh, NC 27604-1029.

Printed in the USA.

A look at next year

With this issue, we complete one year of *Pipes and tobaccos*. It has been such a packed year it seems more like three months. However, the satisfaction derived is more like three years.

Your response has been enough to make all the effort worthwhile. The letters keep pouring in. I read every one, although I must plead guilty to not answering every one immediately. Some are only answered in the magazine. But all are acted upon. You can tell that by the way the magazine has evolved from the first issue.

In our first year we have addressed pipemakers, pipe smokers and tobaccos, among a wide variety of other topics. Our approach to 1997 will be the same, but different, with some surprises.

We intend to complete our overview of the production of tobaccos that are key to pipe blends, including Latakia and Oriental tobaccos. However, we will also be taking the next steps toward understanding how these tobaccos are processed and blended before they arrive at your tobacconist's shop. Along the way, we will look at some of the most famous pipe tobacco blends in the world and how they came about.

Pipes will obviously continue to be a major focal point. There are three basic sizes of quality pipe manufacturers: Large, like Dunhill, Peterson, Stanwell and Castello; Medium, like Mastro de Paja (see page 38), Ser Jacopo and many others; and Small, those quality producers who make comparatively few pipes each year, like Lars Ivarsson, whose story starts on page 22.

Our goal is to provide you a steady diet of all three categories. And those pipemakers will be both domestic and foreign, reflecting the tastes and preferences of our readers.

Beginning in this issue you will find a greater emphasis on "how to..." information (see page 64) and answers to questions you send in about pipes and tobaccos.

Our next request from you is the names of famous pipe smokers, and some not so famous, about whom you would like to read.

The long-run success of this magazine depends on you, our readers. If you subscribe and encourage all of your pipe-smoking friends to also subscribe (or give them a gift subscription to get them started), and if you keep corresponding with us, letting us know the things about which you want to read, *Pipes and tobaccos* will be around to celebrate a number of anniversaries with you.

Happy Holidays!

Dayton H. Matlick

Scheduled for the next issue:

Peterson of Dublin

Germain & Son fine tobaccos

Jess Chonowitsch, master Danish pipemaker

Ser Jacopo, Italian pipemakers with a flair

Mark Twain, pipe-smoking wit and satirist

Iwan Ries & Co., historic Chicago tobacconist

Jim Benjamin, assistant TV and movie producer turned professional pipe cleaner

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P&T Readers Respond

P&T Fall In Review

Last week, I went to a tobacconist in Des Moines to get some tobacco when I saw your magazine. I promptly bought issues 2 and 3 and sent a copy of #3 to a friend in Tennessee, who is a longtime customer of McCranie's Pipe Shop ("Rite of Passage" Fall issue.) I was recently given an Ashton pipe and another one made by Bill Taylor ("Taylor Made" Fall issue) for McCranie's, along with one of McCranie's wonderful blends. Having been a longtime resident of Charlotte, North Carolina, I knew of McCranie's and wish now that I enjoyed pipes then!

William J. Ayers
Lake City, Iowa

Just wanted to say "Job well done." I thoroughly enjoyed the Fall issue and look forward to more of the same. I especially enjoyed the articles on pipe-making. It is refreshing to see those who have achieved that "unification of work and art" ("Creating Art" Fall issue), which harkens back to a simpler time.

Craig A. Jordan
St. Charles, Missouri

I just finished reading the Fall issue and was pleased to see an article about J.M. Boswell ("Keystone Pipemakers"). I have several of his pipes, and they are great. I was going to suggest you interview him, but you beat me to the punch. By the way, add me to the list of Generation X smokers. I am 24-years-old and the former president of the Florida State Cigar Society, which included pipe smokers.

Michael B. Wright
Tallahassee, Florida

A pipe magazine, like a good pipe, is a good friend and companion. That is what I found in *Pipes and tobaccos.*

Jon Williamson
Rochester, New York

I am a little behind in my reading, but have just finished reading and enjoying the Fall issue of *P&T,* and congratulate you on a particularly good issue. I especially enjoyed the various articles on pipemakers, but the others—on the shops, clubs, products, etc.—were fun reading, too. And as you might know already, I always enjoy graphics and photos, and the photos in this issue went a long way in enhancing my appreciation and enjoyment. Keep up the good work.

Tom Dunn
Editor/Publisher
The Pipe Smoker's Ephemeris
College Point, New York

P&T: We appreciate the compliments of any reader. But a pat on the back from Tom Dunn, the dean of American pipe enthusiasts, is a special treat.

Check-up on Health

Keep up the fine work and thank you for addressing the medical issues of pipe smoking "Pipe Smoking and Health" in issue #3.

Keith A. Carey
Memphis, Tennessee

MacArthur Revisited

As to Douglas MacArthur smoking whatever was on sale at the PX ("A Soldier's Prop" in Issue 2), please consider that Harkness Pipe Shop in San Antonio (since bought by the Humidor) served the General Harkness F and G tobaccos. They are still advertised as such.

Harkness F is a mild cube-cut Burley and Virginia tobacco flavored only with a little Latakia and the herb "deer tongue." It is a very mild smoke for those who like old-fashioned blends. Harkness D is much heavier, blended with additional amounts of Latakia. Try 'em and imagine General MacArthur making tough decisions while smoking the same tobaccos.

Stan Millan
Metarie, Louisiana

I loved the article on General MacArthur—the pipes he used and the history behind it, and the personal anecdotes. I would like to see more articles on famous pipe smokers—perhaps one on Mark Twain, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, or modern short story writer Harlan Ellison. Thank you for a wonderful magazine.

Patrick Hannan
San Bernardino, California

P&T: We'll likely get to Twain, Doyle and Ellison in the future. But perhaps you'll enjoy reading about legendary physicist Albert Einstein, this issue's inductee into our Pipe Smoker Hall of Fame.

Trés Bon!

I have been so impressed by your magazine that I took the incredible risk of sending $26 for a three-year subscription. Well, it was worth it. Even though I am French, I live in New Orleans (where else could I live in this country?) Your article about the Big Easy was remarkable and the picture of my favorite tobacco shop—The Epitome—was a pleasant surprise.

Henri P. Gaboriau
New Orleans, Louisiana

P&T: Merci beaucoup

Say What?

Yes, I thoroughly enjoy your 'zine! Another reader wrote about a tobacconist dissin' him cause he is a generation X-er. Well, I feel the same type of diss when I go into a tobacco shop. It seems because I do not look 40 (I'm 32, but I look 25), I get nowhere with some of these cats.

It's very difficult to find print of any sort on the art and pleasure of the pipe. And then your 'zine came along. Fab-o, dude.

Melvin Emanuel Jr.
Minneapolis, Minnesota

P&T: Like, no problem.

Show Time

Recently, in search of more pipe-related reading material, I found copies of all issues of *Pipes and tobaccos.* Without hesitation I purchased every one. I didn't even bother to leaf through the pages because I knew it was just the thing I was looking for. I am sure you have heard this before, but I would like to reiterate how much your long-awaited publication means to the

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pipe-smoking public.

I think a regional event calendar of pipe shows and club events would be an asset to those of us who like to mingle with other pipe smokers. I am sure readers from around the globe would be happy to relay information about upcoming events.

Christopher G. Hallas
Seville, Ohio

P&T: In this issue's "A League of Their Own" on the Southwest Pipe and Cigar League, you'll find a sidebar listing clubs and shows. We invite readers to send us information for the Club and Show Listings, which will henceforth be a regular feature.

Join the Club

A bit of news—The Chapel Hill Cigar Society recently had its first meeting, at the Cafe Driade in Chapel Hill (North Carolina.) My friend Antonio of Pipes by George stated he is considering a local briar club for the Research Triangle area of North Carolina, so soon we might be up and running like the Carolina Briar Friars (Issue #3) in Charlotte. Keep up the good work.

Jim Koch
Pittsboro, North Carolina

P&T: Pipe-smoking poet Jim Koch contributed the fine article "Thief of Fire" on French poet Arthur Rimbaud in our Fall issue.

Blatant Discrimination

I am a graduate student in history and often go to 24-hour restaurants to drink coffee, have a smoke, and study. Recently I was in a Perkin's restaurant. I had been smoking my pipe for about 20 minutes when the waitress approached me and said I was not allowed to smoke a pipe in the building. When I questioned this, she informed me that it was a nationwide policy of Perkin's that only cigarettes can be smoked in their restaurants. I am not only offended, but outraged by this double standard.

This is blatant discrimination and nothing that a class action lawsuit would not fix. I have neither the time nor the money to pursue such a venture, but I would like to encourage *P&T* readers to boycott Perkin's and any others that have a similar policy. I'd like other opinions on this matter. I can be reached on the Internet at DUPPSTADTA@uncwil.edu.

Andrew Duppstadt
Wilmington, NC

P&T: We agree the policy is unfair to pipe smokers. But given the current political climate, we doubt the feasibility of a class action suit. But hitting narrow-minded businesses where it hurts—in the wallet—is probably the best way to get fairer treatment. Before organizing a national boycott or taking any preemptive action, we suggest you contact Perkin's corporate headquarters to make sure that what the waitress told you is accurate. Readers without access to e-mail can write Mr. Duppstadt care of P&T. *Please keep us posted.*

Back Issues

I just received a complimentary copy of your new magazine in the mail. I don't know where you obtained my name and address, but I'm glad you did. It is a very classy magazine. I have included a check for a three-year subscription. I do have one question: Can I obtain copies of issues 1 and 2? If they are anything like the Fall issue, I would hate to miss them.

Carl R. Bradley Jr.
Stockbridge, Georgia

P&T: For now, copies of all our previous issues are still available, but supplies are limited. To order, call our circulation department at 919.872.5040. New subscribers are welcome to "back-start" their subscriptions to include previous issues. Just include a note to that effect with your subscription form.

Waxing Poetic

Over the years of running a tobacco shop, one gets to hear many jokes, poems, stories, songs and smokers waxing philosophical. Here is a small sampling:

"Bad men want their women to be like their cigarettes: slender, trim, all in a row to be selected at will, when the flame burns out only to grab another.

The fastidious man wants his woman to be like his cigar: they give off a better appearance, they last longer, and if the brand is good, they are seldom discarded.

But the good man, ah yes the good man, wants his woman to be just like his pipe: something to smoke gently, lovingly, to take care of always.

A man will give you a cigarette, offer you a cigar, but he will never ever share his pipe."

—anonymous

"The pipe draws wisdom from the mouth of a philosopher, and shuts up the mouth of a fool."

—anonymous

John Kelly
John Kelly's Tobacco Shop
Tustin, California

I came across the enclosed rhyme in an old paperback that I found at a flea market. The book is Carl Weber's *The Pleasures of Pipe Smoking*. I hope my fellow pipe enthusiasts enjoy the words a pipe smoker can live by. I am having a calligrapher put it on parchment so that I can frame it and display it next to my pipes.

A pipe at nine is always fine.
A puff at noon is none too soon.
A pipe at three, the thing for me.
A pipe at seven, the aroma of heaven.
A pipe at nine is half divine.
A pipe before slumber makes just the right number.

Russell-David Goza
San Antonio, Texas

I jotted down a few thoughts as I was smoking my latest acquisition. If you feel they are worthy of being printed, you may do so. I enjoy your magazine and hope this poem serves as a small repayment for the hours of pleasure *P&T* has brought me.

Pipe Muse....

Earthy damp leaves plucked from a jar, into trembling hands.
The feel of wood, softened by time, stirred with passion, sculpted with genius.
Strength and subtlety in one.
Silk on lips, the damp earth of Virginia

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One delicate draw, the breeze of peace stirred the soul.
Flame danced languidly above perfect leaf, and then unrestrainedly and unabashedly leapt into eternity.
One curl of smoke drifted lazily from the bowl, stimulating the nostrils.
Spontaneous combustion and superlative excitement in a single draw.
I stood for a moment in the good earth, feeling warm rain on my upturned face and I knew—Knew the truth at last—and was content, completely satiated, if only for an hour....

Carl F. Avari-Cooper
Temple Terrace, Florida

My Fair Lady

I enjoy my pipes while fishing, reading, watching the boob tube. About the only time I don't have one is when I am out and about. The problem then is simple—I am not a male so it is not acceptable for me to smoke in public, pipes being for the male species and not a ladylike pastime....Surely in all your readers I am not you're only female. I have smoked a pipe for almost 40 years and have yet to meet another female pipe smoker. If there are other ladies who enjoy pipes, I would like to know I am not the only one out here.

Mrs. Louise Duncan
(A lady first, last and always!!!)
Zapata, Texas

The Game Plan

Last May, my son, who studies at Tulane University in New Orleans, sent me your first issue. I immediately asked him to subscribe. Yours is indeed an excellent magazine. As some of your other readers have written, the magazine is read from cover to cover in one sitting. My only criticism is that the magazine is quarterly and not monthly or bimonthly. Who knows? Maybe that will come in time.

Rodrigo Correa

P&T: As advertising revenue and subscriptions increase, we hope to do just that. Readers can do their part by spreading the word about P&T.

Cybersmoke

Are there any plans to make your on-line information available via the Internet, rather than just America On Line? I have Internet and Compuserve and don't need another account to keep track of, not to mention another bill. Smoke in Peace.

Grant Porter
Sunrise, Florida

P&T: Funny you should ask, as we are in the process of establishing a P&T *Web site on the Internet. In the meantime, as Mr. Porter points out, AOL subscribers can preview each issue of pipes and tobaccos on AOL's Food & Drink Network. The keyword is "P&T".*

Close, But No Cigars?

Thank you for creating a magazine for pipe smokers. Please confine your writing to pipes only, rather than including cigars. In the next issue, it would be extremely educational and interesting to talk about pipe tobaccos, aromatic and non-aromatic, their qualities and how they are made.
I am looking forward to seeing our magazine printed indefinitely.

Josh C. Tunca, M.D.
Schaumburg, Illinois

P&T: Having covered some basic varieties of tobaccos in previous issues, we will begin with pipe tobacco companies with the first issue of 1997. There are enough companies and interesting stories to last for years.

Several readers have taken you folks to task for straying from pure pipe and pipe tobacco topics and for boring at least one gentleman with beginner type articles. I thought I should let you know that I—and I assume a lot of other readers—enjoy the diversity of content. Were all of the articles of equal interest to me? Of course not. However one of the best aspects of reading is broadening one's self. As for "beginner articles," please do continue. What our hobby needs is fresh blood to sustain the ranks and carry the faith forward. New pipe smokers have questions that require answers or they will not remain with us. More our loss than theirs.

Jeffrey Jackson
Raynham, Massachusetts

Your Imput Welcome

The editors of P&T *read all your letters. Space limitations do not permit the publication of each and every one. But we gain valuable insight even from those not published, so please keep writing. Your suggestions are important to our decision-making about article assignments and the overall direction of the magazine. Thanks again.—L.O.*

I made a decision about two weeks ago that I no longer wanted to bear the cost of cigars at the rate I was smoking them. I went to my local pipe shop and asked the tobacconist for help in choosing a pipe. I ended up with a $75 Radice Rind. I can't tell as yet if it was a good thing for me to buy or not. I love the pipe—it smokes wonderfully and it looks great—but should that have been my first one?

Gregory D. Pickens
Cyberspace

P&T: Most pipe smokers would rate the importance of a pipe's characteristics as: No. 1, that it smokes well. No. 2, that it is pleasing to the eye. Who's the judge? You, the pipe smoker. Like the woman you love and the car you drive, the pipe you smoke is a matter of personal preference. But from what you write, it appears you hit a bull's eye with your first arrow. Good show!

Hands Off

I enjoyed your Fall issue very much, but I noticed a number of pipe smokers you've photographed were holding their pipes by the bowl. I've been a pipe smoker for 50 years and know from experience that this practice only helps to make the pipe hotter. This magazine, as are other media, are "teaching machines" and every endeavor should be taken to teach the correct way. If you disagree, let me know.

Leslie S. Tobin
Leominster, Massachusetts

P&T: When photographing pipe smokers, we wouldn't presume to coach them on how to hold their own pipes. But you raise an interesting point. And we'd like to know what other readers think.

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A League of Their Own

Southwest Pipe and Cigar League offers camaraderie and a sanctuary from the sometimes hostile outside world

P&T staff report

Jerry Lustig, secretary-treasurer of the Southwest Pipe and Cigar League, has been smoking a pipe for 39 years, ever since the day his father caught him with a cigarette. The elder Lustig was a committed pipe smoker himself and decided, if his son was going to smoke, he had better do it right.

"My father gave me three of his pipes and some tobacco and the other supplies I needed. He started me off and told me how to properly smoke a pipe," said the Brooklyn-born Lustig, who migrated to the Los Angeles area nearly three decades ago.

Back in the late '50s Wally Frank was *the* tobacconist outfit in New York, recalls Lustig. His father took him around to Wally Frank and told them "if I needed anything to put it on his tab. At that time Wally Frank sent you a monthly bill. You could call them up and they would mail you tobacco and then bill you once a month."

A few years later, Lustig was at Long Island University, where many of the students and professors were also pipe aficionados. Professors then had the option to allow smoking in class. "The classroom was his empire."

Lustig, now 55, recalls one history professor who would light his pipe practically as soon as he entered the class. And that was the go-ahead to students who wished to light up theirs, he says. "Those were the glory days of pipe smoking. When I went to college, you were nothing if you didn't smoke a pipe. It was the thing to be—the pipe-smoking college man."

The late 1950s and early '60s was also an era of greater tolerance and civility, Lustig believes. "And then, something happened where every fringe group felt that their agenda was the only one the country should follow, and it became very fashionable to pass laws against something that annoyed you."

Lustig traces the rise of the anti-smoking movement to that disintegration of tolerance and civil discourse. And the resulting hostility faced by smokers in recent years has in turn been one factor in the growth of pipe clubs. "Part of what brings us together is the antagonism of the rest of society," he says.

Lustig's involvement in the Southwest Pipe and Cigar League, which originated as the Los Angeles Pipe Collectors in the mid- to late 1980s, was something of an accident. Six or seven years ago, he responded to a magazine advertisement for Alpine Briars, L.A. pipemaker Steve Johnson's company. "I had some ideas on a pipe design and he had the briar and the ability to make it real, and he produced a couple of pipes for me. We got to be good friends."

Lustig helped the nimble-fingered Johnson land a job with him repairing microscopes for McBain Instruments. And Johnson introduced Lustig to the pipe club, which at the time only numbered about a half dozen members. The club has since grown to about 100 members, and Johnson is the current president.

The club has undergone several name changes. For a brief time it went by a rather arcane moniker—the California Institute of Kapnismology—derived from *kapnismos*, the Greek word for smoke.

"We flimflammed our way into several

meeting halls that way, them (the proprietors) thinking we were a scientific group," laughs Lustig. "And then we filled the place up with smoke, so they didn't want us back again."

The club later changed names again, this time to the less-confusing Southern California Pipe and Cigar Club. When a couple of members moved to Arizona, the club decided that any clubs started by former members would be considered chapters of a league. Hence, the current name—Southwest Pipe and Cigar League. "It sounds more important that way," quips Lustig. "It's all smoke and mirrors anyway, mind you."

In the late '80s, Lustig and Johnson attended a couple of pipe shows in the San Francisco area, put on by the Bay Area Pipe Collectors. By 1991, Southwest Pipe and Cigar League had grown to about 20 or 30 members and was ready to put on its own show. Since then, the Southwest Pipe and Cigar Expo has become one of the country's best shows.

But the Expos have not exactly been hassle-free, Lustig says. Although the club has managed to find larger showrooms as the show has grown, it has run into some intolerance, particularly with the Marriott last year.

"We got the impression that a convention of child molesters would have been more acceptable to them than a convention of smokers. I don't quite understand it. People get so sanctimonious that it begins to get depressing."

But the club persevered and the 1996 Expo, held at the L.A. Airport Sheraton Hotel the last weekend in July, was the club's biggest and most successful. The two-day event attracted more than a thousand visitors and featured about a hundred exhibitor tables. Appearances by a cigar-

Southwest Pipe and Cigar League

The Southwest Pipe and Cigar League holds very informal monthly meetings at a variety of watering holes in the L.A. area, usually at lunchtime on the second Sunday of the month, except May. Meetings feature tobacco, adult beverages, political discussions, etc.

Members include people from all walks of life, including lawyers, physicians, television and microscope repairmen and truck drivers. The club has yearly dues of $15 to help with printing, copying and mailing costs. But pipe or cigar smokers are welcome to attend a meeting before joining. For more information, call Jerry Lustig at 818.882.6216.

Jerry Lustig feels strongly about the current trend of individuals devoted to telling everyone else how they should live their lives. The Southwest Pipe and Cigar League is, at least in part, a form of resistance to this type of pressure.

The Los Angeles Clippers cheerleaders added a very "California" touch.

chomping blues guitarist called Stogie the Bluesman, the L.A. Clippers' cheerleaders and even a belly dancer kept the crowd in a festive mood. And Danish pipemakers Lars Ivarsson and Jess Chonowitsch and American dealers, including Nikos Levon and others, all had healthy sales. "We had babes. We had booze. And we had tobacco. It was two days of pure heaven," he jokes.

Some savvy visitors picked up a tin or two of a special private label blend of mature Virginia and Perique tobaccos, blended and donated to the club by the McClelland Company, and named "Sou'wester" in honor of the club.

"It's a to-die-for blend," says Lustig, who has stashed four tins that he plans to open in six or seven years. "And it's going to be even better then."

Lustig is a fan of mature Virginias, particularly many of the McClelland and Stokeby blends. His favorite day-to-day blend is a McClelland 25 Mature. He isn't "crazy" about most of the Oriental blends. he says. And he normally passes on Latakia. "For me, it's like eating overly spiced food, where you lose the flavor of the food in the spice."

His taste in pipes is more eclectic. He especially likes large, full-bent pipes, such as large Oompauls. But he also has other briars and meerschaums, corncobs, clays, porcelains and antler pipes in his collection. His latest coup was obtaining—through a contact on Compuserve—a morta pipe by French craftsman Patrice Sebilio. Morta is 5,000-year-old, partially fossilized bog oak, found only in certain regions of France, which Lustig says combines the sweet-smoking quality of a meerschaum with the durability of briar. "It's not generally available in the United States, as far as I know," he says.

Rare as the morta may be, its find in no way marks the end of Lustig's search for unusual smoking implements. "My goal is to get at least one example of a pipe made from every material a pipe can be made from."

And then, of course, to smoke them all. ***P&T***

President Steve Johnson acted as master of ceremonies, while Stogie the Bluesman (Patrick Whisnant) entertained admirably.

CLUBS AND EVENTS

St. Louis Pipe Club
9th Annual Gateway Area Pipe Show & Swap, Feb. 8, 1997. Best Western Westport Park. Maryland Heights, Missouri. No admission charge. Display tables $25. Awards given in collector and dealer categories. For more info, call Jay Milton at 314.837.5902 (618.656.7584 evenings) or Bob Callaway at 314.946.8555.

Chicagoland Pipe Collectors Club
1997 International Pipe Show, April 19-20, 1997. Ramada Inn. Harvey, Illinois. Over 150 tables of exhibitors, collectors, and dealers in antique pipes, briar pipes, tobacciana, cigars and tobaccos. For more info, call Frank P. Burla at 630.961.0156.

Carolina Briar Friars
1997 Deep South Classic Pipe & Cigar Smokers' Convention, May 3-4, 1997. Government House Hotel, Charlotte, North Carolina. No admission charge. Tables $40. Pipe collections, tobacco samples, free appraisals, trading, pipemaking demonstration, door prizes, entertainment. For more info, call Gibb Robinson at 704.372.1041.

Southwest Pipe and Cigar League
Annual pipe show (West Coast Pipe & Cigar Expo) held in summer. Los Angeles, California. For more information, call Steve Johnson at 310.820.9706.

Conclave of Richmond Pipe Smokers (CORPS)
Annual pipe show in October. Richmond, Virginia. For more info, call Linwood Hines at 804.342.0761.

The Ohio Pipe Collectors
150 members in 23 states and Canada. Annual show in September. Columbus, Ohio. For more info or a complimentary newsletter, call Bill Unger at 614.252.2904.

(To have your club listed in *P&T*, please send pertinent information to *Pipes and tobaccos*, 3000 Highwoods Blvd., Suite 300, Raleigh, NC 27604-1029.)

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Pipemaker to the Stars

After seven decades in the business, the Tinder Box founder knows a thing or two about pipes and tobaccos

P&T staff report

If you've ever set foot into one of the many Tinder Box retail tobacconist shops, then you know Ed Kolpin. One of the true pioneers of the pipe business, Kolpin founded the first Tinder Box way back in 1948. He sold his first franchise in 1959, long before franchises were the life breath of many American business operations. For a number of years, says Kolpin, he was not just the biggest franchiser of pipe and tobacco shops in America, but the country's biggest franchise operator. Period.

Even at 87, Kolpin is a striking man. He retains some of the Johnny Weismueller-like looks from his surfing youth. His six-foot, one-inch body looms high in his Santa Monica tobacconist shop.

Kolpin's speech seems paradoxically both fast and slow, the unhurried words chock full of rapid-fire anecdotes of movie stars, politicians, Chinese merchants, Old World pipe craftsmen and even mobsters.

But for all the romance and adventure of his long career in the pipe business, it started humbly enough nearly seven decades ago in 1927 in a drugstore his father owned in Santa Monica, California. Kolpin, whose father and six paternal uncles were all pharmacists, was himself a pharmacy student at the time and helping his dad out as a clerk in the store.

He was puffing a cheap briar pipe when one of the store's regular customers popped in. Noting the inadequacy of the young clerk's pipe, the customer handed him one of his own, a Barling. "He said, 'Ed, what are you smoking that pipe for? Let me give you a decent one.'"

Kolpin thanked him and, after cleaning the pipe in grain alcohol, filled the bowl with some Barking Dog tobacco and lit up. "I couldn't believe how one pipe could taste so much different than another. The Barling had a fine mellowness of flavor and a beautiful cool smoke. Every puff, everything was great."

That evening, still intrigued by the quality difference, the aspiring pharmacist cut slivers of wood from each pipe, stained them, as he had learned in pharmacy school, and set them under a microscope.

There was nothing wrong with the wood of the cheaper pipe. Cut from high quality briar, it had the large pores of well-aged briar. But the pores appeared to be clogged with what Kolpin surmised were saps and resins. The pores of the Barling, on the other hand, were sap-free, because the Barling's briar had been dried and cured for years before being made into a pipe.

Kolpin had learned the first of many lessons about the art of pipe making: a pipe that has been cured properly will smoke far better than one that hasn't, because its wood will be able to breathe.

"Breathing is very important," says Kolpin. "I compare it to putting a grate in a fireplace. If you put a log on the grate, the log will burn to white ash. If you take the grate away, the log will smolder and go out. The Barling stayed lit, right to the bottom. Just a great smoke."

Kolpin was hooked. He spent a lot of time at the Santa Monica library learning more about briar. Later he researched tobaccos and blending. The following year Kolpin convinced his father to lease him the drugstore's soda fountain, which he converted into a smoking bar.

"It was an old-fashioned counter, with a large marble top and a beautiful mirror behind it. I cut the stools out and had a brass rail put in, like an old-fashioned bar. The first three days we called it Ed's Tobacco Bar and then a friend made a nice shadowbox sign and we called it Ed's Pipe Shop."

Within a month or so Kolpin had worked out an agreement with a Los Angeles pipe shop to supply him with a higher-quality line of pipes than what his

father had been stocking at the drugstore. And Kolpin was learning to distinguish the quality of pipes and to develop an eye for a pipe's graining.

Smokers' preferences in pipe shapes in those days were different from today. One popular style was the Student Prince, a takeoff on the Prince of Wales shape. The Student Prince had a long, straight stem, straight bit, and a squat bowl with two stripes around the top, Kolpin says. "It was very long and graceful, a wonderful pipe for a young man."

His personal favorite at the time was a slightly oversized, semi-curved bulldog. "A great shape," says Kolpin. "You don't see many of those anymore."

The pipe business grew and so did Kolpin's knowledge of pipe smoking and tobaccos. When pharmacy customers came to his tobacco bar, he didn't just sell them a product, he gave them an education.

Kolpin also had become proficient at blending tobaccos. One of his earliest blends was "The Special," which he describes as an English-type blend with Latakia, Virginia, Macedonian Turkish and long-cut white Burley. "I won't give you the proportions, but I'll tell you that I smoked that blend myself for 40 years."

The pipe business was still a sideline for Kolpin, who planned on becoming a doctor after getting his pharmacy degree. But the dream of becoming a doctor crashed along with the stock market, as the country entered the Great Depression. He did become a pharmacist—by continuing his schooling at night—and practiced alongside his father for 17 years. But all the while, his love of pipes and his pipe business continued.

Within two years of opening the drugstore pipe bar, Kolpin was ready to move to his own premises. He found an ideal location in downtown Santa Monica. The small shop was on Santa Monica Boulevard next to the Majestic Theater (later called the Mayfair Theater.)

"There was no television at the time and so people were shopping and walking in the streets until 11 or 12 at night. And the after-theater business was of course very good. I worked at the drugstore during the day and then I would go to night school. And after night school, I'd come down to the shop and work until 11 o'clock."

Kolpin soon learned how to work the theater patrons who stopped in with their girlfriends for a bit of tobacco. He'd "up" the original sale to include a pipe for a dollar or two. Then he'd push a lady's cigarette holder or case. "I'd say 'Now Joe, you bought yourself a nice pipe, why don't you buy your lady friend something?' It pretty nearly always led to a second sale. And being a salesman is what makes a shop owner successful."

Kolpin would later be a pipemaker for many celebrities, but he had less success with tycoons, at least the one called J. Paul Getty. The billionaire oil baron who lived in Santa Monica at the time occasionally dropped in to buy tobacco. Once he brought in a pipe with a broken stem. Getty complained that Kolpin's quote for the repair—70 cents—was 5 cents more than he usually paid in neighboring Los Angeles. "You'd have your chauffeur drive you all the way to L.A. for 5 cents?" Kolpin asked the billionaire incredulously. "Yes, I would," answered Getty. And Getty never returned.

By the mid-'30s, Kolpin was becoming more and more a full-time pipesman, although he continued practicing pharma-

Ed Kolpin has spent 68 years as a tobacconist and pipemaker, with 50 years at the same location in Santa Monica.

cy several hours a day to help his father. When a savings and loan bank moved out of a larger building several doors down at the corner of 3rd and Santa Monica, Kolpin moved in. He remained there through World War II.

He now had room to install full-sized marvelous, old 6-foot long showcases. In the back of the shop he established his workshop for repairs. And he had a mezzanine where his father-in-law blended tobaccos. In the front of the shop, alongside a bay window, he set up a table where he repaired lighters.

It was in the new repair shop that Kolpin started making made-to-order pipes. Not only was the shop doing well, but Kolpin had also begun a successful mail-order business.

By the late '30s and early '40s, he'd begun attracting numerous Hollywood celebrities, including Turhan Bey, star of "Ali Babba and the 40 Thieves." "I taught him how to throw knives, because he had to throw a knife or two for a movie, and it was one of my hobbies."

Kolpin crafted pipes for Bey, which the actor himself had designed. And then Kolpin made a miniature duplicate—two or three inches long—for Lana Turner, then still a starlet who was dating Bey. Turner later sent a photo of herself smoking the pipe.

In 1947, Kolpin went through what he calls an amicable, but distressing, divorce. In the settlement, he lost the shop. Nearly wiped out financially, he borrowed money and headed to the beaches of France and Spain for several months R&R. Down, but certainly not out, Kolpin used the time to plot his comeback.

When he returned, he borrowed another $5,000 and opened a pipe shop on the family lot at 2729 Wilshire Blvd. in 1948. He designed and built the building for what today seems a tiny sum of $2,750. It was originally 14 by 32 feet, but it has

Manager Bob Gardner and the rest of the Tinder Box staff work surrounded by memorabilia, while the shop's entrance bell rings continually with new customers.

been expanded several times to afford room for his wholesale and mail-order businesses. Kolpin designed the shop in a motif that combined elements of French and English Provincial fashions. "I think it adds a lot of character," he says.

He needed a name for his new shop but "Ed Kolpin's Pipe Shop" was still being used by his former wife. And the seed of the idea to expand one day was already germinating in Kolpin's mind. He wanted a more "neutral" sounding name, one that would be appropriate for more than one shop. And it came to him in a flash of insight one morning at 3 a.m., as he thought about tinder box pistols which are used for lighting fires. "Tinder Box?" Yes, the name had potential.

Business at the new location boomed and the Tinder Box became a regular haunt of some of the movie industry's biggest names. Even Marilyn Monroe would drop in to kibitz.

Over the years, Kolpin made pipes and served as tobacconist to the likes of Clark Gable, Pat O'Brien, James Whitmore, Pat Boone and Yul Brynner. His pipes not only graced their parlors, but some also showed up in their movies.

No star was bigger nor a better customer than the famed crooner Bing Crosby. On one of Crosby's album covers, the singer is smoking a Kolpin pipe. The pipe has a $200 gold band that Crosby's movie studio asked Kolpin to make especially for the star. Kolpin still has a copy of the album, which Crosby autographed for him with the message, "Thanks for great smoking."

The style of pipe Kolpin made for Crosby has since come to be known simply as the Crosby pipe, which Kolpin describes as having a standard bowl with a long pencil-shaped shank. It was modeled after Merchant Service pipes that Crosby had earlier acquired in England. And of all the pipe shapes Kolpin has made, the Crosby was the most popular.

But the nicest shape in the world means nothing if the wood is not cured properly. And not surprisingly, Kolpin developed his own special techniques. He places the bowl and about one inch of the shank, never the entire pipe, into 151 proof rum in a covered glass container for 12 hours. Then the pipe is removed and placed under infrared light for another 12 hours. The process is painstakingly repeated for from six weeks to two months. "It's amazing the resins and saps and goop that has come out of that briar at the end of two months," he says.

No large-scale factory could emulate the method, he says. And he learned it the hard way—by trial and error. "But the end result is a very cool, dry-smoking pipe with no juice. A fabulous smoke," he says.

In 1951, he made his first of many business trips to Europe, where he has over the years met with the grand masters and other legendary figures of the pipe business in Denmark, Italy, England and France.

Then, in 1959, he turned over active running of the Wilshire shop and the rest of the business to his two sons. Forty-nine years old at the time, he decided he'd take a world tour to look for a place to retire. He went first to Hawaii, a favorite surfing location to this day. Kolpin recalls sitting on a surf board waiting to catch a wave, thinking that he should be feeling on top of the world. But, instead, he felt that he wasn't needed anymore. He decided then

Kolpin pipes, like the ones above, were smoked by some of the biggest stars.

and there he wasn't ready for retirement.

"I thought 'Why don't I open a shop here in Hawaii. And then maybe some more in other places,'" he says.

Before catching his first wave, he paddled ashore. Without changing out of his red swimming trunks, Kolpin went to see a friend who ran a clothing store in Waikiki. The store had a big shoe department in the rear, but not for long.

Within half an hour, Kolpin had sold his first franchise. He put a sign up on Kalakaua Boulevard—The Tinder Box Waikiki, recalls Kolpin.

From Hawaii, Kolpin went on to Japan where he hired a company to make Zippo lighter knockoffs for the Tinder Box. Next was Hong Kong where he bought an assortment of items, including ivory tampers. From there, he traveled to the meerschaum mines of Eskisehir, Turkey. He became one of the first Americans to actually go down into the mines, second only to another legendary pipesman—Wally Frank, he says. "He beat me by just a few months. But it was a great experience."

Kolpin finally returned to the United States after visiting 22 countries in nine months. In 1961, he began opening a stream of new shops, mostly in California. Some were franchises, some he owned. Finally, in 1967 he turned over the whole corporation to his sons—all except the Wilshire store, which will celebrate its 50th anniversary in the coming year, Ed's 68th year as a tobacconist. "And I was on my own again, which made me very happy—just me and my little shop. No pressure there at all, just lots of fun."

Kolpin's sons—Eddie and Karl—opened another 87 or so stores before selling Tinder Box International to IMASCO, a Canadian conglomerate, some years later, Kolpin says.

Kolpin was free again to travel to the trade shows in Germany, buying direct from major European manufacturers for his own shop.

Nearly 30 years later, he is still active in the pipe shop, though he no longer travels to Europe. Pipe sales are up, he says; he is optimistic about a rebound of the pipe business. "The pendulum always swings back," he says with an assurance that only comes with years of experience.

He still sees a few of his friends from the old days, such as James Whitmore, who still drops by the shop. "Oh, he's in all the time for new bits," says Kolpin.

And of course he is still smoking his pipe. For many years he was partial to GBD Canadians, a pipe Crosby also liked. These days, the legendary pipemaker-to-the-stars smokes a semi-curved Charatan. And usually it's a second. "If I take an expensive pipe with me someplace to a party or whatever, I always lose it."

And he still makes a Crosby now and then—once or twice a year for special customers. Talk about a collector's item! *P&T*

How to...
KEEP A PIPE LIT

Over his many decades in the pipe business, Tinder Box founder Ed Kolpin tackled the mechanics of pipe smoking, using the scientific methodology he learned as a pharmacist. Kolpin says the formation of a cake at the bottom of a pipe's bowl lets tobacco breathe as it burns. He likens the process to the working of a grate in a fireplace.

Kolpin developed a method of coating the bowl with a thin layer of a mixture of honey and water, which allows the cake to form properly.

He also instructs pipe smokers in other fine arts, such as rekindling a pipe that has not been puffed on for a minute or so, without having to relight it. How? By blowing gently as one would into a tiny balloon, much as a blacksmith restokes a fire with his bellows. Then draw slowly on the pipe with the bowl partially covered by the palm of your hand.

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Nature's Designs

For Lars Ivarsson, each pipe is a creative journey. It demands an open, flexible mind that blends both conscious and subconscious for a unique result

by Dayton H. Matlick

In nature, every shape or design already exists. Man finds himself continually rediscovering these shapes to meet his current needs. From the spiderwebs of our suspension bridges to the parachutes that carry seeds long distances on the wind.

In pipes, there are apples, eggs and chestnuts, among many.

The influences of these shapes are both conscious and unconscious. Danish pipemaker Lars Ivarsson, long a student of nature, is in the process of preparing for total immersion in this information source. He and his wife, Annette, are selling their comfortable house in the small village of Thorkildstrup now that the children are grown and gone, and are remodeling a small cottage near Gelstrup on 12 acres of land bordered on one side by a government-controlled forest and on another by a fjord. Across the waves curling toward the beach, the opening of the fjord into the sea can be seen in the distance.

Lars is not looking forward to retirement—the day when he is unable to make pipes—but to comfort himself, they have enough land for "a small flock of sheep, or maybe ostriches."

As Lars walks the 50 yards or so to the beach from the building he is remodeling into a workshop, it is possible to sense him reach out to the beauty around him. Dogs nearby, under close control, his tall, strong body moves easily, belying the gray in his beard and the receding hairline.

Having lived on a small farm when he first went into pipemaking on his own, this is not all new to Lars, but rather like taking an old experience to a new level.

Lars grew up in Copenhagen within a 20-minute walk from the pipe workshop of his famous father, Sixten Ivarsson. From the beginning, Lars was fascinated by carving techniques—not necessarily pipes, just carving wood. "I didn't care whether I carved a boat or a pipe or a slingshot," says Lars. "Because there was material available with which to work, of course I played with making pipes."

The workshop was also a good place for a boy to earn pocket money. When he was 12, he could make a couple of dimes for cleaning a pipe; allowances became a thing of the past. By the time he was 13 or 14, he could replace a broken bit for a dollar.

"Every time I had a couple of hours, I would make the 20-minute walk to the workshop," says Lars. "It wasn't only for the money, but also for the fun of using the machines. I've always been fascinated by the techniques.

"There were two pipe shops that sent repair work to my father. It was my job, along with some others, to make the repairs. Luckily, the repair jobs ceased; they weren't that much fun."

By the time he was 16, Lars was selling pipes professionally. Most of his pipes at that time were modeled after the outstanding pipes created by his father. Then, one Saturday evening when he was about 18 years old, he found himself in the workshop. Without knowing why, he picked up an impossible piece of wood and just attacked it—vigorously.

"Suddenly I saw the light. Things can be made different from my father," says Lars. "That was one of the big steps. Things like that don't become part of your consciousness until afterwards. You can't see it during the process."

Later, Lars attended the university in Copenhagen, graduating with a degree in business economics in 1969. "I never used it for anything except catching politicians in lies.

"Actually, I knew before I graduated that I was going into the pipe business. There was a big pipe boom in the United States and Japan. There was a strong demand and I was already represented in every Japanese book or magazine about pipes. Besides, I had difficulty seeing myself sitting behind a desk with a pile of paper in front of me."

In 1970, Lars moved out of Copenhagen to a small farm. In addition to pipemaking, he got involved in house remodeling and part-time farming, on a small scale. His workshop was converted from the old pig sty.

With his daily exposure to nature in his new rural setting, a lot of information seeped into his mind. One example he gives is of a blowfish he had in his aquarium. After much time watching and many rolls of exposed film, Lars became aware of how the blowfish bends its tail sharply to one side when it prepares to attack a snail, its favorite food.

Suddenly, he realized it was the shape of a pipe; or, conversely, a pipe could be in the shape of the fish! It pleases him that the original shape from that insight has been used by numerous pipemakers as they search for their own directions.

Lars has a high standard for his very best work. He created a special stamp for these "ultimate"

The shapes and forms of nature hold delight and inspiration for this second generation pipemaker.

pipes. The importance of the stamp is under scored by the fact that he has used it only 35 time since 1974. Significantly, the stamp he designed i of the blowfish in its attack position.

Another example, Lars points out, is the eg shape developed and perfected by his father, Six ten. Over the years, it has become a classic stand ard. Although everyone may not use it in th same way, the influence is there.

When Lars talks about creativity, he frequen ly makes reference to each individual's "designe disk." This disk is like a computer memory disk If sufficient experience is in there, the mind ha needed background data upon which to base con scious and unconscious decisions. If the disk i lacking data in general or in specific areas, th end results will probably be lacking, too.

"Creativity is a very complex thing," says Lars "If my designer disk is filled, I can nearly run movie in my mind, changing the shape of pipe—stretching it out; making it shorter an rounder.

"I can look at a block, go through this process and know that I want to make a round pipe tha looks like the picture in my mind. So, when I star with a block of briar, I have a goal. And, of course in the process of making a pipe I have to change the goal all the time.

"I may know exactly what I am going to creat from this block, and the next stroke by the grind ing disk may change the goal a little—or a lot.

"If you are working in clay and you run into a problem area, you can fix it. But when you work with a piece of wood, everything you do is irre versible. You can't put sawdust back on the pipe and start over. It's sawdust; it's gone.

"I am constantly making subconscious deci sion after decision while the creative process is going on. If I have to do all of these decisions consciously, it won't work.

"Down through the years I have done drawing after drawing. I have used stacks of paper and miles of pencils. But that is only to have a back ground. When the saw or the sandpaper meets the wood, it is time for the intuitive side to come to the front—to take over."

Lars explains that on one level the process is very simple: Take away all the wood that doesn't look like a pipe. The first removal of the wood is usually not a problem, he says. It takes only a short time with the coarsest sandpaper.

Then, as you work the briar, you are constantly presented with new and different challenges—a flaw here, a change in the grain there. When that happens, he pauses for a moment or so. His designer disk then comes up with a new concept to fit the new limitations.

"It is intriguing to find ways to solve problems as they arrive. And all the time, I have to remember that I have to make a four-millimeter channel

Lars Ivarsson pipes have a distinctive appearance with smooth, flowing lines. The pipe above was good enough to rate his "fish" stamp, denoting the best of the best. If you look closely at the stem, you can see the mark of the stamp. With sides of bird's-eye and straight grain across, it is a beauty to behold. Its shape brings to mind the image of that blowfish, tail cocked, ready to attack.

from one end of the pipe to the other."

The creative process is the same, yet different, with his absorbing avocation—making handcrafted knives. He refers to the knives as an avocation or hobby, in comparison to his vocation of making pipes.

"As a boy of only 12, I was constantly making new handles for my knives and reshaping the blades. Then, by accident, I stumbled over a book about handmaking knives. It said that it was possible to make knives by hand. I was captivated.

"My first knife sold professionally in 1983. Prior to that time, I made a lot of knives and other items, but gave them away as gifts.

"This is amateur work; work that is done purely for the love of it. Is it possible to find a phrase that says 'an amateur creating professional work?'"

Lars figures he spends about three times more hours making a knife than for a pipe. "Since the material costs are the same, it's not good business, but it's fun. I'd say that any customer interested in a handmade pipe would also be interested in a handmade knife, if he has even the least affection for knives.

"The first time I took my knives to Japan, probably in 1984, I showed them to a pipe shop owner. He immediately said he would like to present the knives in his store, along with my pipes. The next year when I returned to Japan, his shop had been transformed to 50 percent pipes, 50 percent knives."

The biggest difference between making a pipe and a knife is that with a knife you must make your cuts exact to a quarter of a millimeter. Once the steel is hardened, you can't change the shape.

"And then you have to do the hollow grind. Making a double hollow grind is not all that difficult, but making it so it actually looks good takes practice and more practice."

The finish of the blades is without flaw or waver. Held perpendicular to the printed page in a book, the words are reflected back perfectly. Each knife fits the hand as though it were designed specifically for that hand, clinging to its proper place. The sheaths are simple, yet elegant in a design that enhances the shapes of the knives. The handles are subtly just right to complete the whole.

"This goes back to the point I was trying to make earlier. The more technically good you are, the more freedom you have in the design work," says Lars. "Professionally, I don't make things that are difficult because if they are difficult, I can't control the design of things. So, OK, some of the things take a hell of a lot of time, but they aren't difficult."

Whether in working with pipes or knives,

much of the work is done patiently, laboriously, slowly—by hand. Although the first cuts and shaping go quickly, the finishing of the shape is the result of hours upon hours of gentle, precise strokes.

Hand and eye work together to ensure that a curve is not too abrupt; that the balance within the elements is perfect; that the result is the best that can be achieved, no matter how long the effort takes. Producing a large number of pipes has never been a goal for Lars. Instead, perfection of the finished product, as found all around us in nature, is the goal he follows. As a result, he creates fewer than 100 pipes a year.

The results of this effort are creations that mirror nature in balance and perfection. *P&T*

Unrestricted airflow through the entire channel is essential for an easy-smoking pipe.

How to...
SELECT AN EASY SMOKING PIPE

Once you pick the shape and size of pipe you like, test the airflow, says Lars Ivarsson. Draw in through the empty pipe at normal smoking force. There should be no sound or, at most, a deep, hollow sound. This means the airflow is not restricted, an essential element of a good-smoking pipe.

If you have any whistling sounds, meaning restricted airflow, you will probably have trouble keeping it lit and it will probably smoke wet.

Every diesel engineer could explain the problem to you, according to Lars. You're getting turbulence in the airstream when you exceed a certain speed. The sound of that turbulence indicates that the smoke will get separated. Smoke is actually microdrops of moisture containing hot air and aroma. When air passes quickly through a restricted passageway, turbulence moves the heavy particles, including the moisture, to the perimeter, like separating cream from milk.

This can be caused by too small a diameter or sharp corners in the smoke passage. Very often the problem can be in the mouthpiece or where the mouthpiece joins the shank.

This is an extremely important issue. From a strictly smoking standpoint, the filling of sandspots has absolutely no impact. But the physics of the boring of your pipe will definitely have an impact on the taste of the pipe and your smoking pleasure.

For all of his pipes, Lars uses a four millimeter channel from one end of the pipe to the other. This may vary with the pipemaker, but the sound test will still hold true.

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Self-taught

grand master

by Dayton H. Matlick

Sixten Ivarsson grew from bill collector to the most outstanding pipemaker of the 20th century.

Sixten Ivarsson was born in Sweden in 1910, during difficult times. His father died when Sixten was eight and his mother supported Sixten and his three sisters by selling soda pop, ice cream and other items out of a stand near the beach. Later, for a period of time, she was a housekeeper for a big farmer in southern Sweden. School holidays were set to coincide with the back-breaking task of harvesting potatoes.

In the late '30s, Sixten moved to Denmark to escape the horrible unemployment that was blanketing Sweden. He took a job with his brother-in-law as a bill collector. He could barely tolerate the job and filled his time with hobbies, like fishing and woodcarving. Occasionally the carving included a pipe. It was the pipe carving that created a new start.

Toward the end of World War II, he made a pipe from an elm root and started looking around for a vulcanite mouthpiece. At last he found a supply in a shop run by a tobacconist named Suhr. Sixten asked for a mouthpiece but was informed that the pipe repairman was out with a broken leg.

Sixten pleaded to be allowed to fit the mouthpiece himself. The tobacconist agreed reluctantly, warning him that the machines were so out of adjustment as to be almost unusable. The first thing Sixten did was to align and adjust the machines. Then he made his mouthpiece. This resulted in an immediate offer of a job as a pipe repairman.

With bill collecting behind him, Sixten focused on repairs. But there was also a demand for new pipes. Monetary restrictions after the war prevented the importation of ready-made pipes. But they could get blocks of briar. One day a customer visiting the shop indicated he wanted another pipe just like the one he had in his hand. Sixten said he could duplicate it and proceeded to prove his boast. The price quoted the customer was far more than Sixten and the shopkeeper expected to get, but the customer was delighted with the pipe and paid at once, without complaint. Pipemaking immediately became part of Sixten's repertoire.

He stayed with the tobacconist until 1951, when tensions between the two caused Sixten to leave and start a temporary pipe repair shop in his kitchen. Some of his part-time work included creating and finishing pipes for Stanwell.

Later in 1951, he acquired a shop on one of the main shopping streets in downtown Copenhagen, now part of a famous pedestrian shopping street. At that time, it was still quite difficult in Denmark to buy a good pipe: importation was still banned.

By the time the economy got back to normal, Sixten Ivarsson was established as one of the leading pipemakers in Denmark. In 1961, a buyer named Robert Carlsen from Marshall Fields in Chicago heard that especially good handmade pipes could be bought from Sixten in Copenhagen. He was followed by tobacconist Iwan Ries, also from Chicago. Shortly thereafter, the Japanese also became interested in Sixten's handmade pipes.

Danish freehand pipes suddenly became the rage and everyone, regardless of ability, started making them. Many were unsmokable. This killed the cat. The market dried up, leaving behind only the truly qualified.

The excitement caused by Sixten's work was due to the new types and shapes of pipes he presented to the world's pipe buyers—shapes that had not existed previously. Before he started, there were only about six kinds of pipes available and four sizes. There were bent, full bent, quarter bent, apple and so on.

Sixten ignored the shape charts. He explored the many ways that a creative pipemaker could connect a hole for tobacco with a hole in the mouthpiece through which to draw out the smoke.

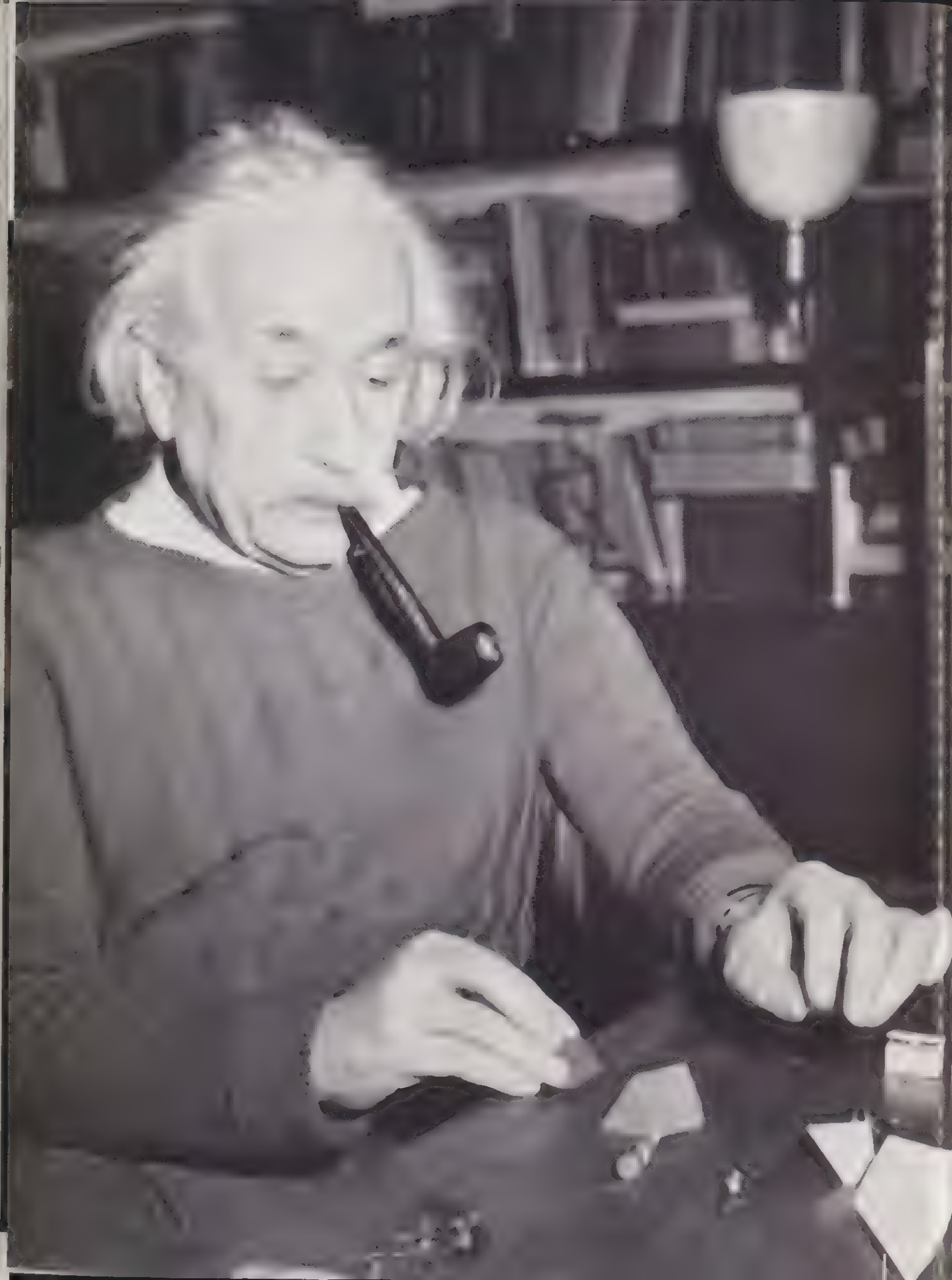
This creativity continued until two years ago when failing eyesight and physical problems forced him to retire from pipemaking at the age of 84.

The impact Sixten had on the look of pipes cannot be overestimated. The new paths he made freed the minds of talented craftsmen all over the world. In "The Illustrated History of The Pipe," authors Alexis Liebaert and Alain Maya write that Sixten Ivarsson is "considered by many as the best pipemaker of the 20th century."

The new directions he generated are also carried on more directly by three of his apprentices: Lars Ivarsson, his son; Jess Chonowitsch; and Jorn Micke, who lives and works on an island 10 miles from Copenhagen. ***P&T***

Note: See the article on page 22 of this issue on Sixten's son, Lars, who is adding new directions of his own. In the next issue, we will follow with an article about Jess Chonowitsch.

A photograph from the past shows Sixten Ivarsson, right, and son Lars working on pipes together at the father's Copenhagen workshop.



RELATIVITY

and other pipe dreams

The pipe-smoking, legendary Albert Einstein tended toward simplicity—in physics and in the pursuit of life's pleasures

by Larry O'Connor

$E=mc^2$. Energy equals mass times the speed of light squared. It's easily the most recognized scientific equation in history, the formula by which Albert Einstein described the equivalence of mass and energy.

That "mass and energy are merely different manifestations of the same thing," as the legendary philosopher-scientist put it, was a radical notion. As was the idea that measurements of time and space are relative to an observer's frame of reference. Even 90 years after Einstein introduced them, the concepts are fuzzy at best to most people.

In revolutionizing mankind's most basic assumptions of the physical world, Einstein became, as George Bernard Shaw put it, the "creator of a new universe." And if you need a few minutes—and a pipeful or two—to ponder the significance of Einstein's massive ideas, there's no need to feel intellectually challenged. The man almost universally considered the greatest scientist of the modern era spent nearly a decade grappling with his special theory of relativity, in which he explains that time and space are not separate entities, but rather interrelated aspects of a four-dimensional space-time continuum.

The pipe-loving physicist once said, "Before answering a question, I always light my pipe." One can only wonder how many pipefuls of tobacco went up in smoke before the final insights into special relativity exploded in a flash of inspiration one night in 1906.

Until Einstein came along, the prevailing laws of physics were those laid down by Isaac Newton two centuries earlier. Newton maintained, among other things, that objects moved through space in "absolute motion," irrespective of their relative position to other objects.

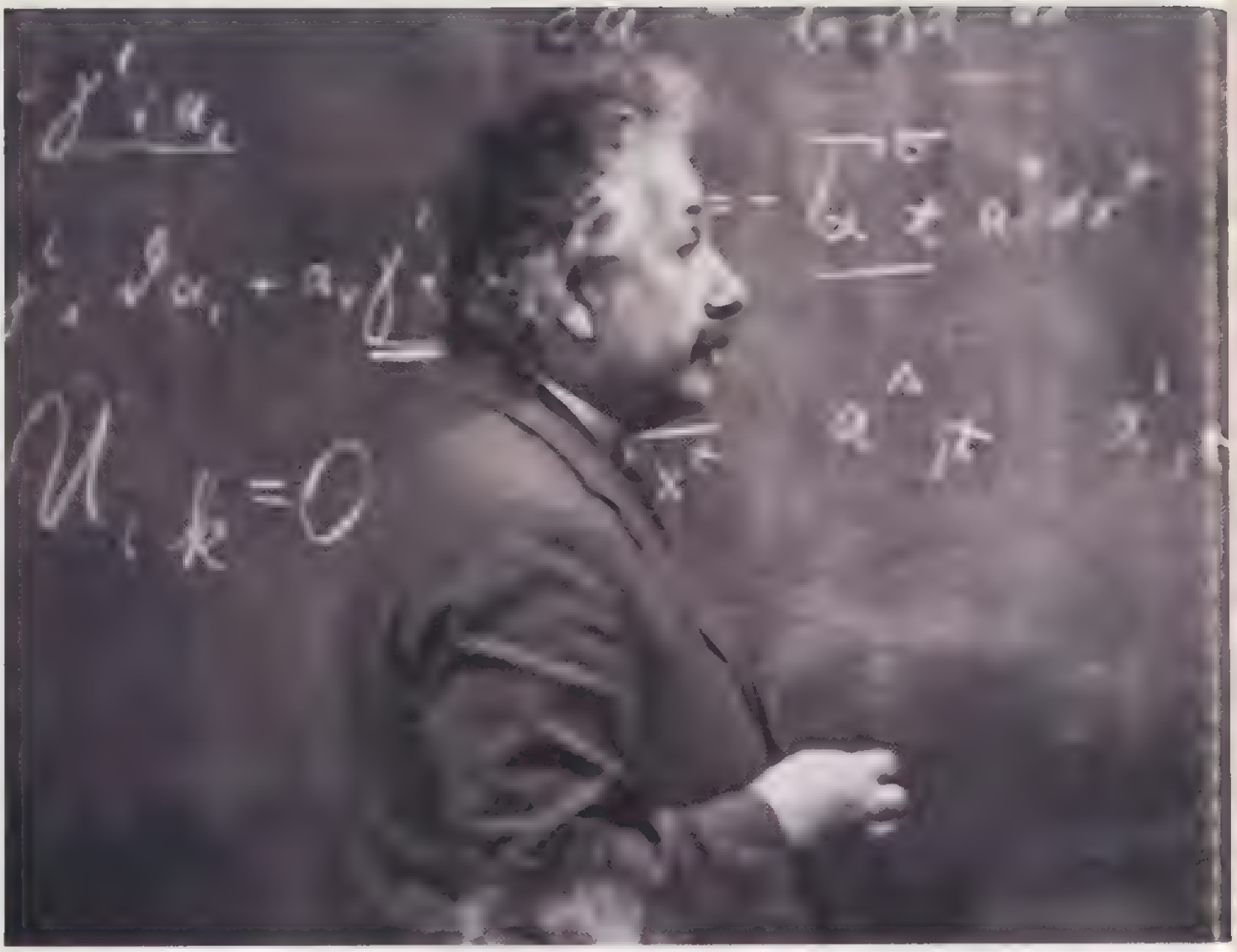
Einstein countered that the notion of absolute motion was meaningless. One object's motion was always relative to the motion of other objects, he said. That "relativity" is the basis of his theory.

Newton also assumed, logically enough, that measurements of time and space would be the same for all observers. An hour was an hour and a meter was a meter, regardless of the observer's frame of reference. But Einstein's investigation of light led him to believe otherwise.

It had been assumed that measurements of the speed of light from a star would differ slightly depending on whether the earth's own movement was in the direction of the starlight or away from it. But experiments had shown that light speed appeared the same, regardless of the Earth's direction.

Einstein asserted that the speed of light was indeed a constant. But if the velocity of light appeared the same for all observers, even those traveling in different directions at different speeds,

"I believe that pipe smoking contributes to a somewhat calm and objective judgment in all human affairs."
—*A. Einstein*



Einstein spent nearly a decade grappling with his special theory of relativity. In doing so, he "created a new universe."

something must be wrong with their perceptions of distance and time.

Einstein solved the dilemma by adopting what still seems the most illogical of ideas—that perceptions of space, and indeed time itself, are relative to the observer's frame of reference.

The classical physics of Newton worked fine at speeds that were small relative to the speed of light. But at velocities approaching that of light, Einstein reasoned that changes in perception from one reference point to another would be enormous. Clocks traveling at such velocities would appear to slow down and yardsticks would appear to shorten.

The total reformulation of mankind's view of the universe was an audacious step for a lowly, 26-year-old patent examiner. But Einstein was in singular lack of awe of established science. "If the facts don't fit the theory," as he explained it, "change the facts."

Albert Einstein was born in Ulm, Germany, on March 14, 1879. His parents were assimilated Jews—non-practitioners of the religion. He was late in learning to talk and his parents wondered if he was retarded, a suspicion shared by some of his early teachers. But even as a five-year-old, Einstein had displayed a fascination with the magnetism of a compass that should have marked him as anything but slow.

School was drudgery. Although gifted at math, Einstein was hopeless at rote learning, the predominant teaching method in German schools of the 19th century. Einstein's time in school was not happy. He was considered a kid with a bad attitude, one who learned only what struck his fancy. But Einstein would later maintain that of fancy—or imagination—and knowledge, the former was more important to his success as a physicist.

Einstein's real education took place more informally. He was introduced to science and philosophy by an impoverished medical student, who was a weekly guest in the Einstein home. And his uncle turned algebra into a fascinating, fast-paced game that excited the young Einstein.

Despite a short period exploring and practicing the Jewish religion as a pre-teen, Einstein soon rejected formal religion and the notion of a personal God. But unlike many scientists of the day, Einstein did accept a divine presence, and

championed the wisdom of Judeo-Christian moral and ethical precepts. "Science without religion is lame; religion without science is blind."

The mistrust of authority that led him to question established science and religious tenets was even more pronounced in the political realm. Revolted by the chauvinism and militarism of German society, Einstein paid three marks at the age of 15 to renounce his German citizenship. Some years later he would claim Swiss citizenship, but for the time being he was effectively a man without a country.

After graduating from the Zurich Polytechnic and a short stint in teaching, Einstein, then 23, landed a position in the Swiss patent office in Bern. He loved decoding the confusing language of inventors and translating it into coherent descriptions of their intricate inventions. It was undoubtedly good training for a man who would in a few short years begin to decode the secrets of the physical universe.

In 1905, the young examiner published a series of remarkable papers, which he had written in his spare time. In one, he explained so-called Brownian movement, the zigzag motion of minute particles of matter suspended in a gas or fluid. The classic example was the particulate matter suspended in the smoke from a pipe.

In another paper, which would earn him the Nobel Prize 17 years later, he postulated the existence of light quanta, or photons. It was these minute particles of light, according to Einstein, that accounted for the photoelectric effect, whereby metals and other substances emit electrons when light falls on their surfaces.

As important as those discoveries were, it was his paper "On the Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies"—now known as his Special Theory of Relativity—that would turn the world of science upside down.

And there was much more to emerge from the mind of Einstein. By 1907 he had realized that his theory of special relativity implied the equivalence of mass and energy ($E=mc^2$). Thus the formula that was his greatest contribution to physics was little more than an afterthought for Einstein, a mathematical footnote to an earlier theory.

Four years later he equated the forces of gravitation and inertia. And in 1915 he expanded his special theory of relativity into a general theory. Among other things, the general theory asserts that matter within space causes a curvature of the space-time continuum, much like a heavy ball placed on the surface of a flexible mat that has been pulled taut.

Much of Einstein's work was beyond the grasp of the common man, but his prediction that starlight coming past the sun would be deflected from its expected course by the gravitational field of the sun was something much more tangible. Einstein challenged his colleagues to put his theory to the test by observing starlight emanating from behind the sun during a solar eclipse. When his predictions proved accurate during an eclipse in 1919, his theories made international news.

Einstein most likely would have been content to live, think and create, if not in anonymity, then at least at arm's length from the world. But the world's most famous scientist was drawn into the political fray.

The physicist returned to Germany to work with other eminent scientists shortly before the outbreak of the First World War. Unlike most of his colleagues, who fully sup-

Strangely, Einstein's work is used to link him with the development of atomic weapons.

ported the militarism of the German state, the pacifist and socialist-inclined Einstein spoke out against war. He even tried to enlist intellectuals of other countries in a joint effort to save European culture from destruction. Such un-German activity won Einstein few friends at home.

As the Nazis rose to power in the '20s, Einstein was included in their long list of enemies. Relativity was denounced as "Jew propaganda." Einstein was traveling abroad in 1933 when his home and possessions were seized. He went on to America, eventually settling in Princeton, New Jersey, where he received a research position at the newly formed Institute for Advanced Studies. He would never return to his homeland.

The greatest irony—and tragedy—of Einstein's life is the linking of him and his work to the development of atomic weapons. In the aftermath of the destruction of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, the role of science in the dehumanization of man was a topic of much debate. The gentle physicist-philosopher was somehow transmogrified into the father of the bomb. *Time* magazine for its July 1, 1946, edition, for example, depicted a sad-looking Einstein on its cover. In the background was an exploding mushroom cloud, with the $E=mc^2$ on its billowing cap.

While Einstein had an enormous impact on the unfolding of nuclear physics, the link between his work and The Bomb is tenuous at best. Speculation on the possibility that atoms might contain enormous quantities of energies had already begun by the end of the 19th century, at least a half dozen years before Einstein published his theories. And Marie Curie researched radioactive properties of uranium even earlier.

Einstein's work certainly gave the world a better understanding of matter and energy. But the idea of harnessing that energy by splitting an atom was to Einstein pure fantasy, as was the possibility of starting a chain reaction of such nuclear reactions. As late in the game as 1929, when neutrons (which would later be used to bombard uranium atoms) were discovered, Einstein was still pooh-poohing the possibility of nuclear fission.

The sole direct influence Einstein had on the development of atomic weapons was political, not scientific. In July 1939, Leo Szilard, an expatriate Hungarian physicist, visited Einstein. Szilard told him that Germany's scientists had successfully split the atom and that the Nazis would eventually build super bombs with the new technology.

Szilard alone would have had no influence with the American government. He needed Einstein's prestige. Despite his long history of pacifism, Einstein wrote a letter with Szilard to President Roosevelt suggesting that America should consider developing the weapons first.

Later on, Einstein, who had been blacklisted from the Manhattan Project as a security risk, wrote Roosevelt again, saying that to actually use the bomb against the Japanese would be madness. Roosevelt died in office with Einstein's letter unopened on his desk.

Einstein was crushed by the news of the annihilation of Japanese cities. Although an optimist

by nature, he took an increasingly dim view of mankind's chances for survival. "Only two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity. And I am not sure about the former," he quipped.

Until his death in 1955 from a ruptured aorta, Einstein worked for disarmament and a one-world government, for which he was investigated by J. Edgar Hoover and branded an enemy of America by Senator Joe McCarthy.

Despite his unpopular political beliefs, the almost Hobbit-like nuclear physicist remained a hero to most Americans. And his international reputation remained untainted. At one point he was even offered the presidency of Israel, whose creation he had long supported.

Through it all, Einstein remained in many ways the simplest of men. He never got used to being viewed as a genius and handled his celebrity with humor. It was his almost child-like wonder and his love of simplicity that led him to his great theories. "The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious; it is the source of all true art and science."

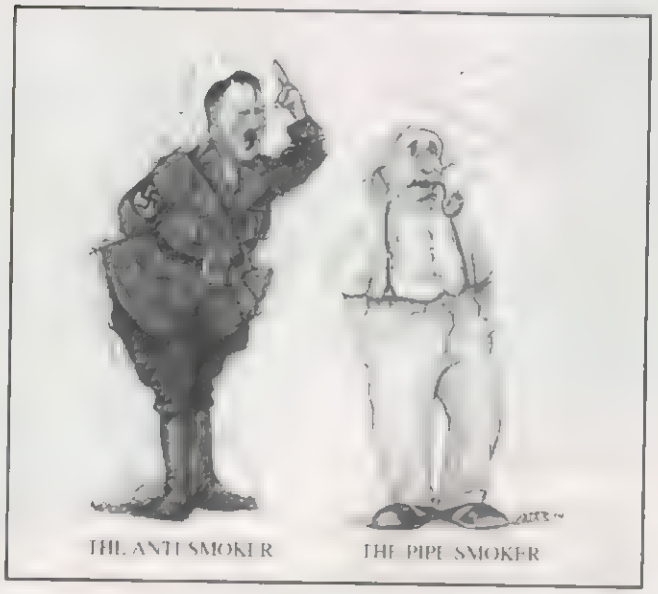
Unlike most scientists of the modern age, Einstein worked, as do most artists, on intuition. For a man who found the elegance of a mathematical argument more convincing than the correctness of its calculations, the inconsistencies apparent in classical physics had been as much an aesthetic affront as a scientific conundrum.

The same love of simplicity was evident in his private life. The world-renowned scientist's wardrobe seemed to consist primarily of baggy sweatshirts and sweaters, and wrinkled, ill-fitting slacks. Early on, he dispensed with the practice of wearing socks as an unnecessary waste of time.

Similarly, Einstein's greatest enjoyment of life was to be found in simple pleasures. The violin. Sailing. A pipeful of tobacco. In the recently published "Einstein: A Life," biogra-

pher Denis Brian writes that the image of "Einstein calmly contemplating the stars as he puffs on his pipe and occasionally writes the odd equation" was more fiction than fact. And Einstein himself fostered the image in an attempt to mask his more turbulent nature, Brian asserts.

But Einstein's delight in pipes is unquestioned. Although he smoked an occasional cigarette or cigar, the scientist was first and last a pipe smoker. At least one writer says Einstein preferred pipes with deep bents. But an extensive pictorial record shows the scientist with countless pipes of varying styles, including straights and bents. It appears that Einstein, regardless of the pipe shape, preferred moderate-sized bowls. And in one famous photo of Einstein and Szilard, Einstein is smoking a lengthy churchwarden.



Cartoon provided by Rick Newcombe

There is also some priceless film footage of Einstein and biochemist Leon Watters engaging in a pipe-smoking duel at a cottage on Long Island in 1938. The film shows the two eminent scientists trying to outdo each other in smoke production before erupting in a fit of coughing and laughter.

A natural comedian, the twinkle-eyed Einstein loved to mug for cameras. And he enjoyed jokes that explored the foibles of man, especially those with Jewish themes. But he had a serious side, as well.

Einstein's aphorisms and philosophical essays are at least as numerous as his scientific discoveries (though obviously less important in the grand scheme). And his affinity for such a wide range of endeavors—math, science, music and philosophy—was a throwback to the time of the classical Greek philosopher-scientists.

And it was in the contemplative throes of philosophy that Einstein found the companionship of his pipe the most beneficial. As Einstein eloquently put it, "I believe that pipe smoking contributes to a somewhat calm and objective judgment in all human affairs." *P&T*

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Mastro de Paja

Family approach is key to successes achieved by this Italian pipemaker

by Dayton H. Matlick

Alberto Montini, general manager of Mastro de Paja, throws his arms wide, encompassing the new concrete building and everything in it. "This isn't a factory; it's more of a family," he says, with an even bigger, warmer smile than usual. His normally high energy level seems to reach new heights when he talks about his company.

There is no rigid hierarchy. No supervisors. Everyone knows their jobs and they perform them with a will. For those questionable situations, there are two "uncles"—Vittorio "Toto" del Vecchio and Mario Pascucci—who between them have been making Mastro de Paja pipes for 30 years.

The development of this "family feeling" isn't due to just organizational structure or "empowerment," whatever that means. It is also actual family ties, combined with long-term friendships. People who are working together by choice.

For example, Fabio Patrignani, an art school graduate with two years of experience with the company, is the nephew of Mario. Simone Marinelli, a young man with a strong artistic flair—and a relative newcomer with only eight months on the job—is a brother of Alberto's wife, Cinzia. Giuliana Foschi, another art school graduate with one and a half years on the job, has known Cinzia since they were six years old.

And then there is Cinzia herself. When you hear that the general manager's wife works in the factory, there is a tendency to assume she is in administration or accounting. This assumption is absolutely wrong in Cinzia's case.

Beginning in 1990, Cinzia started work full time making Mastro de Paja pipes. For the first

Alberto Montini frequently arrives at the Mastro de Paja factory by 5 a.m., working long days on widely varied activities. Cinzia works full days in the factory herself, moving easily and confidently from one task to another. The pipe shown on the left is a short Lovat graded 3C, near the Fiammata or straight grain level, but not quite there. Grading standards are high.

three years she spent seven hours a day, six days a week sandpapering briar.

Today, Cinzia can make 80 percent of everything related to a pipe on her own. She especially likes doing the last in the series of sandpapers and, later, the staining. With these tasks she feels she can put the final touch on the shape and finish of the pipe. It helps that "uncle" Mario believes that Cinzia has become the "best" at these tasks.

"In making pipes, I can put myself into the work, be creative," says Cinzia. "I get a tremendous sense of satisfaction from creating a quality product. It all starts inside myself with a love of pipes. If you don't love the work, it is impossible to do it properly."

Either Alberto, Mario or Cinzia is involved in the critical final quality check before a pipe is finally approved. Quality is a fetish in the company and it shows in the results.

The site of this pipemaking activity is Pesaro, Italy, located on the Adriatic Sea, almost equidistant between Venice and Rome, and less than 90 miles by train from Bologna. The city of over 100,000 inhabitants has beautiful, sandy beaches that teem with tourists during the summer. The warmth is surprising at first because the city is located near the same latitude as Portland, Maine; Toronto, Canada; Boise, Idaho; Sioux Falls, South Dakota; and Saginaw, Michigan, none known as summer resorts. The secret is the great mass of shallow water that makes up the Adriatic Sea and the way it can capture and hold the sun's warmth.

The Mastro de Paja factory is less than four

Finding new markets outside Italy was essential to survival in the mid-1980s.

miles from the massive, old castle Rocca Costanza, which is located in the original center of Pesaro. But don't try to find your own way through the myriad small streets.

Alberto and Mastro de Paja have come a long way since he joined the company as a young 27-year-old eager to show his stuff. The quality of pipes from this famous company is solid; the value, some of the best in the business. But there have been some anxious days.

As a young executive in his uncle's *padelle* (pots and pans) factory, Alberto was fed up with pushing papers. Administration and accounting were not what he had envisioned for his future. There was no people contact, something he sorely missed. After a talk with his uncle, he began to look around for other opportunities.

About the same time a Pesaro industrialist named Terenzio Cecchini found himself with a famous pipe company that was floundering for lack of good management and leadership. The two got together and in March 1985, Alberto Montini started as general manager of Mastro de Paja.

After a sales boom in the early 1980s, 1985 sales were dropping like a stone. The "why" answers came quickly. First, Mastro de Paja was entirely dependent upon Italian sales. And the Italian pipe market was in a slump. Second, earlier pressures for increased profits through increased productivity had loaded Italian tobacconist stocks with Mastro de Paja pipes. Third, this same push for greater production had damaged the company's sterling reputation for high quality.

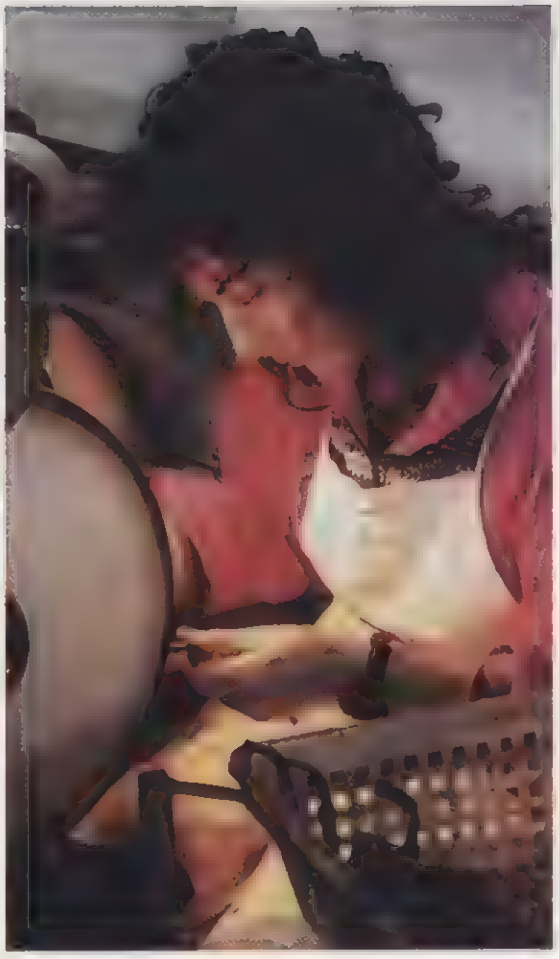
"When the Italian pipe boom came in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Castello was already known as one of the best pipe factories in the world. They resisted temptation; they kept production down and quality steady," says Alberto. "When the market dropped, it was in the minds of pipe buyers that Mastro de Paja pipes were available everywhere, but it was hard to find Castellos. Therefore, it was perceived to be more important to have a Castello than a Mastro de Paja."

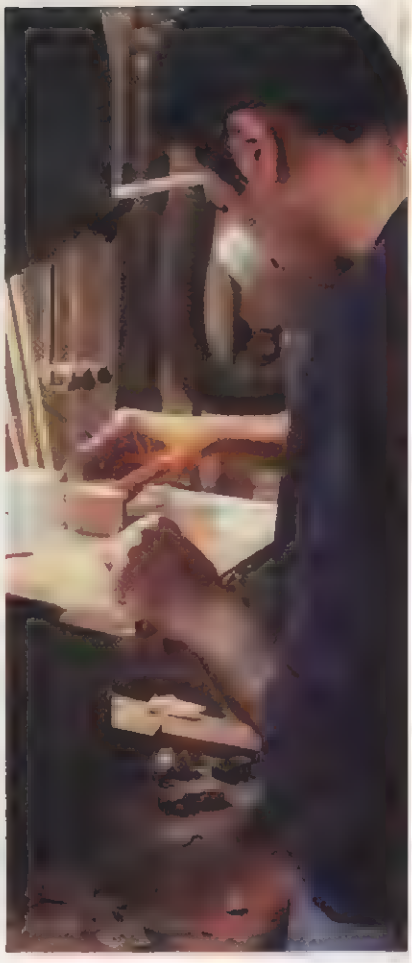
The focus on entirely domestic sales was stifling the company. This was almost a 100 percent reverse from the pots and pans factory of Alberto's uncle, where over 90 percent of production went to overseas markets.

"One of the first marketing decisions I made was to stop selling pipes in Italy. I wanted Italian tobacconist shops to clean out their stocks. Second, I reduced employees to make only enough quantity that would allow us to maintain strong control over quality. Third, I started developing markets in other countries," says Alberto.

The first market that Alberto tackled was Germany. He took his pipes to the big Frankfurt show in 1986. Fortunately, the response was immediate.

"It was my good fortune that my German importer, Hans Jurgen Assmann, liked pipes and





On this day, Mario marks the shape of pipes to come, while Toto and helper bring those shapes into existence. Simone, Cinzia's brother, operates the lathe on a special project; Giuliana focuses on buffing; Fabio usually cuts away the bulk of unwanted wood before the bowls go to Toto.

knew them well. He was meticulous; he checked every piece we sent him and continually gave us constructive criticism that enabled us to serve that market properly. In effect, he conducted a school for me from which I learned much. Today, we are one of the most important pipes in Germany. You can see our pipes in all of the best shops."

Two years ago, Assmann died, but he has been succeeded by his 24-year-old son, Sven, who is also a pipe lover. "He came from the school of his father," says Alberto, in praise.

"Germany was very important for us. With the Italian market in a deep slump behind me, if I didn't start to sell in other countries immediately, it would have been too difficult to go on. The German market made the difference. This was followed by successes in other European countries—Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Poland, Portugal, France and Spain. Today, Italy is once again one of our best markets."

The Germans like classic pipes, and Mastro de Paja makes about half of its pipes in classic styles. Most of the remainder are near classic, with a few pieces of avant-garde. The near classic pipes allow the pipemakers room for some creativity; the opportunity to put some of themselves into each pipe.

Mastro de Paja USA was opened in 1991. Thomas Cristiano, manager of U.S. operations, began as a director and is now a partner. He and Alberto work closely together, in constant contact.

The U.S. currently makes up 22 to 25 percent of Mastro de Paja pipe sales. Two of the best-selling finishes are 3B, a regular, smooth, natural-colored pipe, and 3C, similar to 3B, but with more straight grain. These retail for $340 to $580. A new finish that is selling well is OB Unica, a pipe with partial rustication. Each Unica pipe is worked in a different, unique way. (A full list of the Mastro de Paja nomenclature and classification system accompanies this article.)

A further collaboration took place between Mastro de Paja and the Fabrizio Gentili box and humidor factory. The agreement between the two companies was solidified in 1989 or 1990. Today, they have one of the most important cigar humidor names in the world. (An article on this interesting woodworking operation will appear in a future issue of *P&T*.)

Alberto, Thomas and Fabrizio continue to work and grow together, but with the emphasis always on quality.

Each month, the factory works about 700 pieces (about 8,000 pipes a year) and usually has 3,000 pieces on hand. About 20 to 25 percent are smooth pipes in natural color. The average retail price is about $400. When Alberto opened markets in other European countries, he found markets for both sandblasted and carved or rusticated pipes, neither of which was popular at

"I see a definite future for pipes in the world. A pipe is a philosophy, a style of life."

Mastro de Paja Classification System

TERMINOLOGY: O=Rustic; B=Dark; C=Light; 1=Sandblast; 2=Partially rusticated or sandblasted; 3=Regular, smooth pipe; Fiammata=Straight grain; Unica=Special unique or individual touch.

OB=Rustic black or dark brown. Most used of the Rustics.
OC=Rustic light brown or natural. Not much used now.
OB Unica=a relatively new classification for pipes with partial dark rustication. Each is worked in a different, unique way.

1B=Dark-colored sandblast, the most used.
1C=Light-colored sandblast; not much used today.

2C=Partially rusticated or sandblasted; less straight grain.
2D=Partially rusticated or sandblasted; more straight grain, light color.

Ruber=Red color with some small spots filled. Could be a 2C or 2D.
Nera=Black with some small spots filled. Could be 2C or 2D.

REGULAR SMOOTH PIPE:
3A=Dark color, smooth finish, normally brown.
3A1(Sole)=(new classification). Color between dark and natural.
3B=Natural color.
3C=Natural color with more straight grain.

STRAIGHT GRAIN:
Fiammata 1 Sole (sun)=90 percent straight grain.
Fiammata 2 Sole=The difference is a combination of shape and briar.
Fiammata 3 Sole=Decided by Alberto and Mario. Typically, only one is produced every two to three years.

Note: From 3B up into the higher grades, all pipes are natural color.

PRICE:
In general, suggested retail prices for the lower quality pipes start at $160. Ruber pipes would start at $170. Most 3B and 3C pipes would fall between $340 and $550. Fiammata pipes are priced by the piece and start at $600. *P&T*

that time among Italian buyers.

This level of pipe production takes a lot of briar. Mastro de Paja maintains a stock of 10,000 blocks of briar. Briar selection is done entirely by Alberto, Mario and Toto. Each block of briar is checked individually before purchase. Briar is usually kept on hand for one and a half to two years, depending on the weather, before it is worked. Alberto explains it is easier to dry briar properly when the outside humidity is low.

To see if briar is ready, they clap two blocks together. "If there is a special 'song,' you can be sure the briar is ready. If there is not a clear ring, they must dry some more," says Alberto.

During the transition to the Mastro de Paja of today, Alberto had several things going for him. Perhaps the most important was three accomplished pipemakers who had been with Mastro de Paja for years—Mario Pascucci, Vittorio del Vecchio and Corrado Boni, who is now retired. Their nucleus of expertise reestablished a reputation for high quality. Their experience and abilities are supplemented by two other long-time Mastro de Paja pipemakers, each with 15 or more years of experience, who work out of their homes.

"When Cecchini hired me, he told me: 'We have a famous brand. I haven't got the time to work with the company inside. Take it; make what you want out of it. If you have good success,

I will sell you a 30 percent interest,'" says Alberto. By 1988, he had earned the ownership position.

Then, in June 1994, Cecchini just disappeared. No one apparently knows where he went or where he is. A full year of very active negotiations with his heirs followed. During this time there was a lot of anxiety in the factory. Although it was difficult on the employees, after exactly one year, Mastro de Paja belonged to Alberto and his wife, Cinzia. They have two children—Alessandro, 13, and Alessia, 5.

"It is important that throughout this period, quality and production held up strongly. This again comes back to Toto and Mario. They made sure things happened properly."

"I had never seen a pipe close up before I came to Mastro de Paja," says Alberto. "I learned about pipes on the road, selling. I lived and breathed pipes. I never lost a moment trying to learn about pipes. I have even tried to make pipes, but I haven't had the time to perfect my skills. I can work with some of the middle coarseness abrasive papers.

"When I changed jobs, everything became good. I found I liked pipes immediately. They seemed somehow like magical instruments. After a short time, something happened inside me. I'm sure I have found my dimension.

"I see a definite future for pipes in the world. A pipe is a philosophy, a style of life. I like that very much, I want to always make better pipes and humidors to be part of that future. I live briar. It is a nice wood with a wonderful grain.

"But, at least right now, I don't want to take on more employees. I don't want to make more pipes in the future. I want to maintain the same quantity and make the best design and quality we can.

"Our success is our people, those of us who work together and the customers who buy our products. To serve both well, we have to grow individually and as a company. To create good pipes, we must put much of ourselves into our work; to explore new things. For that reason, everyone has a key to the factory. After hours they can come here and strive to make new things. If a new idea is accepted, it can go into production. Everyone has the opportunity to find their own new level," says Alberto. *P&T*

Approximately 90 to 120 shops in the U.S. carry Mastro de Paja pipes. If your local tobacconist does not, he may be able to special order for you. For information about the tobacconist nearest you who carries Mastro de Paja pipes, contact Thomas Cristiano, Mastro de Paja, 6408 W. Linebaugh Ave., Suite 101, Tampa, Florida 33625. Call 813.961.5788 or 1.800.886.7252. The company sells only through retailers.

I went through some baskets filled with pipes in the factory and picked out five at random for photographing. There was no rhyme or reason to the selection. The pipes just caught my eye. They are presented individually in the same order as they are located in the pipe stand above. On the left is an OB Unica, textured down two sides. Second, a 3C, straight stem, slant front. Third, a 2C, a six-sided, partially textured pipe with a sterling silver band. Fourth, a partially textured OB with a slight bend. Fifth, a 3C, near the Fiammata or straight grain level. All are free-hand pipes.

A Short History of Mastro de Paja

Mastro de Paja, a famous name among world pipemakers, was created in 1970 by Giancarlo Guidi in the town of Pesaro, Italy. The design school graduate and self-taught pipemaker launched his new business in a small building located behind the home of his parents, not far from the center of Pesaro.

The fledgling company was a success almost from the beginning. Guidi was soon joined in the business by Giannino Spadoni.

The origin of the name came from a play on words. Of course, "mastro" is similar in meaning to the word "master." Guidi was looking for a phrase that would be musical to the ear, as well as drawing to mind Italy's colorful history. Before modern straws, Italians used wheat straw or stems for drinking. Paglia is the word for wheat straw and paglietta is the word for small straw; from there it made the transition to "paja." It was the music of the phrase, Mastro de Paja (master of the straw) that convinced Guidi that he had found the name.

While looking for a symbol to go with the new name, he came up with the thought, "My pipes must be beautiful like the sun." The intellectual leap went from the thought to an Italian deck of cards. The due di dinari (the two of diamonds, or, more literally, the two of money) card has the picture of a bright sun with a face on it, almost identical to the design chosen for the company logo.

The company went through a period of rapid growth. A businessman named Sergio Gattei brought needed capital into the operation. Activities diversified to take advantage of the company's image.

The rapid growth put a strain on quality, personal relations between the business associates and on the financial stability of the company.

In 1982, toward the end of the Italian pipe boom, Guidi indicated he wanted out. He was told he could go, but he had to leave the name behind. Shortly thereafter Guidi started a new company named Ser Jacopo.

Not long afterwards, Gattei sold his majority share of Mastro de Paja to a Pesaro industrialist named Terenzio Cecchini. After two years, Cecchini forced Spadoni out of the picture and, in March 1985, hired Alberto Montini as general manager. By 1988 Montini had created a strong enough success that Cecchini sold him 30 percent of the company.

Then, without any warning, in 1994 Mr. Cecchini just disappeared—"went away." After one solid year of negotiations with the Cecchini family—and many anxieties within the company—Montini and his wife, Cinzia, emerged as 100 percent owners of Mastro de Paja.

Dedication, energy and obsession with quality have enabled Montini and his co-workers to continue to build Mastro de Paja into a widely respected maker of quality Italian pipes with markets all over the world.

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Utilitarian Art

Trained sculptor turned pipemaker brings added dimensions to the wide variety of pipes he creates

written by Chuck Stanion
photos by Lori Brightwell

Pipes have replaced Randy Wiley's original yearning to sculpt human anatomy.

Randy Wiley moves assuredly from one machine to the next, pipe clamped in his teeth, wood chips scattering and dust shooting into the air.

"I've been meaning to get the vacuums working again," he says sheepishly, shutting off the 1910 French turning machine and feeling the inside of the tobacco chamber he's just drilled. A grin expands under his sawdust-filled mustache, and he flicks on the band saw. He deftly moves the briar block through the blade, shaving and shaping.

He appears unconcerned that his hands dance past the blade close enough to trim his nails. Miraculously, all his fingers are still available to help clamp the block down for turning the shank. That done, he takes two steps over to another machine—there's no telling what it is, but it looks like something from the Spanish Inquisition—and drills the air hole.

"I'm surprised more pipemakers don't use this machine," he says. "It eliminates a lot of problems." They probably don't use it because it's scary as hell. It shrieks like a rusty dentist's drill heard through a megaphone as Wiley leans over it and pulls the two-foot drill bit toward his own entrails. Meanwhile, the table it's on trembles and rocks as though in abject terror.

Wiley chooses a mouthpiece from one of 20 bins, and in seconds has sized the tenon and fitted it into the pipe. Back to the band saw.

"I can see the grain pretty well now, so I'm shaping the pipe a little." He moves on to the grinder, which now fills the shop with an unendurable, jet engine-level clamor. "This box over the motor," he screams, "helps baffle the noise!"

Briar fragments leap toward the fluorescent lights and settle into his hair and onto his forearms as the block evolves second by second toward its final, flowing freeform shape.

"This'll be pretty nice," he says happily, the grinder winding down to silence. His fingers travel over the curving surfaces of the wood, reading its potential as he steps to the disk sander.

Wiley's Tampa, Florida, shop is not air-conditioned, and the heat propels dust spirals upward in the sunlight pouring through the huge, open door. Perhaps the climate is part of his secret wood-curing process? "Maybe," he says with his unfailing grin and chuckle. "I'm willing to take credit for that."

Extra credit is the last thing Wiley aspires to, however; his work has testified for two decades to his talent and professionalism.

"Some pipemakers are self-taught," he says, "learning through trial and error. We all experience that, of course. But I had a little more structured apprenticeship before reaching that stage."

That apprenticeship progressed through several phases, beginning with an enthusiasm for art, which Wiley pursued in college. "I started to see that sculpting was where I wanted to go, but there wasn't a lot offered there. I wasn't interested in abstract art; I wanted to study sculpting through human anatomy, and I'd have to go to the Ringling School of Art for training in true anatomy. But things fell together differently."

In 1971, he was working a summer job, painting in the old Tampa Museum ("not painting art," Wiley cautions. "I was, well, refurbishing walls") when he met Ray "Pappy" Holt, a prominent woodcarver.

"This guy had to be 70 years old," Wiley reminisces. "He was six foot four or five, walking through the museum with these magnificent animal woodcarvings. I said, 'Whoa, did you do those? Do you give lessons?'"

The whole bottom floor of the museum had been dedicated to Pappy's work. "He was their biggest draw," says Wiley. "I apprenticed with him for two years, learning to carve animals. It wasn't human anatomy, but it was sculpting, and I learned to handle wood. At that time I wasn't sure what I wanted to do, except that I wanted to do something with art. I jumped at the opportunity."

They worked nights, from the time the museum closed "till whenever we staggered out," says Wiley. "I looked forward to it every day. We carved and Pappy told endless stories of his old

When Wiley turns on his band saw, he has no way of knowing whether the block of briar will yield an exceptional pipe or a failure. The secret lies inside the wood and with the skill and experience he brings to the task. The only Wiley Seven-Day Accumulation set, shown below, contains the finest pipe from each of seven consecutive years.

A grinder rotating at 34,000 rpm is used by Wiley for hand carving.

barnstorming days. He kept me going."

Wiley's first task was to learn to keep his tools sharp. "Pappy never let up on that. It's fundamental, but essential. And," he says, leaning forward, animated by the obvious pleasure of the memory, "not without a real sense of accomplishment: taking an edge down to where you can see the reflection right off the very peak, and honing it back and forth until that little edge falls off. You can literally run it across your arm and leave a shaved path." He laughs. "I had no hair on my arms for two years."

He learned much more in that time than how to shave, however. Besides sharpening carving knives, Wiley sharpened his eye for form and balance, and for keeping shapes in perspective. And he absorbed a philosophy that he has carried with him through the years.

"Pappy didn't just teach woodcarving. He taught you an attitude, a respect for the art, and how to totally enjoy what you're doing without dwelling on the monetary value."

Equally important, especially considering Wiley's reputation for flawless finishes, was Pappy's unflagging insistence on an absolutely immaculate final product. "No knife marks," says Wiley. "No file or rasp tracks. No sandpaper trails. I learned to detect and correct even subliminal imperfections.

"I was lucky to fall in with someone who still believed in the system of apprenticeship. You don't see much of that any more, except in the trade unions. But it's still something that has its place, although there are fewer craft-oriented jobs these days.

"Seems like everything's mass-produced. You don't have to be skilled in full production anymore; you just learn one phase. You might do the lamination in a cabinet shop, while someone else does the hardware and someone else the shelving. You're not learning the whole thing. That's probably one of the reasons why Europe has the flair that it does—because they still respect apprenticeships. That's really how you learn: by being around a master."

Gradually Pappy Holt needed to offer less and less advice to his talented student, provide fewer answers, less guidance, and Wiley found himself ready to move on.

"I answered an employment ad for a woodcarver. I showed up with my animal carvings, and was hired that day. It was a pipe company. I didn't know dirt about pipes, but hey, it was woodcarving, and I had confidence in that respect."

Thus a new apprenticeship was begun, but one in which the mechanics of the trade were Wiley's primary concern; he brought with him his artist's vision and his own unique inspiration.

"The main thing in learning the new trade of pipemaking was just investigating a distinct series of individual tools, and mastering the locomotor

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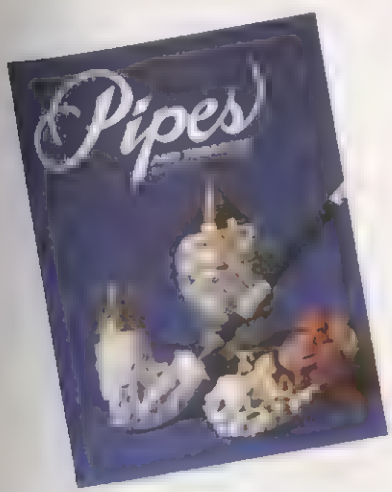

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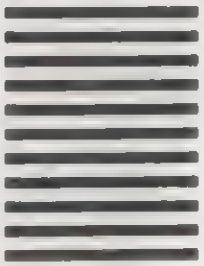

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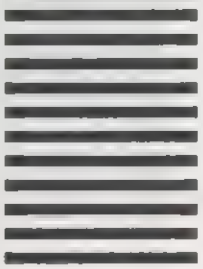

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skills necessary for employing them. Sure, it was different from sitting down with a whittling knife, but it was a relatively simple transition to the more mechanized tooling."

Wiley was now in a shop with master pipe carvers, and in one short year was a master himself. "Take out the word 'short,'" laughs Wiley, reading a draft of this article. "It felt like a long, long time."

Indeed, Wiley found his two years in supervised pipe manufacture—one as an apprentice, and one as a master—artistically unfulfilling. No one was at fault, Wiley asserts. "The styles they were succeeding with just differed from my natural inclinations. I wanted unconditional artistic freedom."

So, at the age of 25, he quit his job and started making his own pipes.

Wiley was not intimidated or apprehensive when he took this step in his career; he was firmly confident in his ability. "I knew I could make high-quality pipes, and I'd seen what other masters were producing. There was a problem acquiring equipment at first, but I got along."

Wiley's budget required he use care and ingenuity in stocking his shop. "It was a weird collection of machines at first. I used whatever I could find—garage sale motors, flea market stuff; I strapped down a three-dollar washing machine motor and ran it with whatever belts I could find for my first turning machine. I tooled my own blades out of stock steel. I didn't have my own briar source at that time—got it from a local distributor who had some sort of European connection. Funny the stuff that people import."

He started carving, and when he had 36 pipes he took them to a local Tinder Box. "The owner was concerned that I'd marked 'USA' on the pipes. He said, 'It might be hard to sell these' because they'd have to compete with all the big European names. But I said, 'Well, this is how it's got to be. I'm in America, and my pipes are going to say so.' This was before all the 'made in America' hype, when some pipemakers actually spelled their names differently to sound more Italian, like, oh I don't know, 'Smitholini' or some such thing. But that shop ended up buying all three dozen pieces."

It was a stunning triumph for a first sale. "I remember driving home that day, yelling out the car window: 'Yeah! Yeah!'"

Now Wiley had enough cash to buy more briar, "with a little beer money left over." He worked diligently, happy in his new autonomy, and called the Tinder Box after a couple of weeks to see how the pipes were selling. They were glad to hear from him. "Bring more," they said. "Bring them today."

Virginia reentered his life about this time. They'd been friends in high school, after which she had become a flight attendant with National Airlines. In town for a few days, she looked him up. They began dating, were soon married and a year later Myla was born.

"During her maternity leave," says Wiley, "we found that the pipe business was supporting us adequately, so instead of going back to work, she started taking care of the administrative aspects of Wiley Pipes." Virginia became, and has remained since that time, a full-time mother as well as a full-time administrator.

"She's really the brains of this outfit," says Wiley, looking up from the sander and pushing his stool back over to the grinder. The sanding has brought the pipe's grain into clarity, and he wants to shape it some more in accordance with the wood's natural characteristics. "Without Virginia I'd probably be in jail for not doing my taxes or paying my bills or following up on any of that paperwork stuff."

Coincidentally, Virginia now steps into the shop, bringing the phone. "Sorry to interrupt," she says, "but you need to take this call, Randy." She's a lovely woman, with long brown hair and piercing, intelligent eyes that seem to look directly into your thoughts. She radiates a comfortable, friendly charm. Virginia's engaging smile and Wiley's candid grin complement each other perfectly.

"No problem," says Wiley into the phone. He hangs up and he and Virginia step into the office to record the order that's just come in.

Wiley Pipes is an old-fashioned, family business. Teenaged Myla and Micah handle the shipping, packing up pipe orders and filling out UPS labels and making entries in the shipping log. Eight-year-old Nolan sweeps the shop, "and occasionally stains a pipe," says Wiley. "I supervise that pretty closely, but he gets a kick out of it."

The possibility of a second generation of Wiley Pipes has not escaped Wiley, although, he insists, it's entirely up to Nolan. "If he shows an interest, I'll encourage him, and teach him until his standards are even higher than mine. If it works out, I envision Nolan working the super high-grade pipes, and I'll stumble along helping him out until he loses all patience with my incompetence and banishes me from the shop. Then I can just sit on the porch, happy in my senility, carving simple pipes and ranting about politics."

The Wiley family is a remarkably self-reliant unit. Virginia homeschools the three children. "They've never been in a public or private school," Wiley asserts. "No need; Virginia is a great teacher, and the kids are bright students. We're very active with other homeschoolers in the area, so they get plenty of socializing and outside activities."

Wiley emerges from the office. His pipe has gone out, and he sets it on a workbench, picking up another that still has yesterday's tobacco in it. He fires it up, tamps it with his forefinger, and

No knife marks; no file or rasp tracks; no sandpaper tracks. Wiley learned to detect even subliminal imperfections.

Although Wiley does not sandblast, he believes rustication is a serious art form. He has developed two different carving styles for rusticated pipes.

steps back to the grinder.

"See where the grain is shifting here?" he says. "I'll put a crease in the bowl and follow that grain along the side. You'll see." The grinder roars.

Wiley's pipes have developed in several ways through the years. One of his first moves was to find his own briar source. "I did some research, and found this guy in Greece who has provided me with very consistent briar ever since. I'm able to use close to 95 percent of the blocks he sends, which are all plateau briar. And I get some very exceptional pieces out of them."

Wiley tries for a smooth straight grain with every pipe, but when he encounters poor grain quality or superficial flaws or fissures that will detract from the final finish, he has different methods of saving the piece. He never sandblasts, and he never uses putty on Wileys, but he will spot carve over flaws with his distinctive feather design.

"I also have two carving styles for rusticated pipes: the Sea Reef, which is a smoother rustication, and the Meteor, which is considerably rougher." These do not diminish the quality of the pipe. "In fact," says Wiley, "rustication is another serious art form. You have to design the finish, and you have to design the tools for achieving that finish. There's a great look and feel to carved pipes; and they are very appealing to the tactile senses."

The Wiley oil-curing process has also evolved. Wiley is one of the few makers who oil cures his pipes. "It's well worth doing," he maintains. "I like the subtle flavor it provides, blending with the briar. And I love the way it colors a pipe, quickly bringing out a deep, brown hue."

During the first year of production, Wiley treated his pipes in a warm oil bath. "Those pipes darkened very quickly," he says. "But with heavy smoking the oil could bead through the wood somewhat."

He received some calls from concerned clients, who wondered why their pipes were sweating. "I assured them that nothing was wrong. But that heavy oil treatment did make me dissatisfied with the final finish. Those pipes just wouldn't hold the polish as well as I'd like. I soon started treating only the inside of the bowls, which still provided the subtle flavor and darkening qualities I was looking for, but also allowed me to apply a great wax finish. And the pipes stopped 'sweating.'"

The shapes of Wiley pipes have changed, too. "I used to carve some very intricate, organic shapes," says Wiley, "much more often than I do now. I listen to what the retailers have to say, and try to supply what they want, and that has pulled me into more traditional styles and simpler freehands. The shapes are still heavily influenced by my own style, however. And, let's face it, the bri-

The four pipes on the far left have met Wiley's standards for his super high-grade Ovation line of pipes. He is one of the few pipemakers who oil cures his pipes. He believes it enhances the coloring process. Both of the pipes on the left were originally the same color. However, the one on the right has been smoked a dozen times. Also note that the tobacco chamber of the new pipe is as carefully finished as the outside.

ar often has a mind of its own."

Wiley's style is highly recognizable, and he is enormously respected by retailers. Ron Houck, owner of The Wharf in Beavercreek, Ohio, has 10 to 20 clients who look forward to each shipment of Wileys. "Randy has a distinctive, recognizable flair for art that carries over to his pipemaking," Houck says. Houck has carried Wiley pipes in his shop since 1981, and has noticed an increased demand for the higher grades. "With the decline of cigarette smoking due to restrictions in the workplace, people want to enjoy their pipes more. They appreciate the better pipes, and realize that high quality can translate into a lifetime of enjoyment. The grain quality and creative shapes of the Wiley line makes it a recognizable value."

"I can literally spot a Wiley at 20 yards," says John Sabia, owner of The Tobacconist in Temple Terrace, Florida. "Wileys are always obvious from across the room."

Sabia personally chooses his own stock at Wiley's workshop. "I had Randy's seven-day set displayed here not long ago," he says. "Jaws hung open, grown men foamed at the mouth and openly wept. Astonishing!"

But the Wiley personality is evident in all the grades. "It's hard to explain," says Sabia. "I see a lot of beautiful pipes, but the Wileys exist in another dimension. It's the difference between a high-quality photo of a fine old oak tree, and seeing the tree itself, with wind in the branches and the sunlight flickering through the leaves. Randy's pipes shouldn't be just looked at; they have to be experienced."

The fine details of Wiley pipes have not gone unnoticed, either. "Randy's fit and his finish are always excellent," affirms Gary Pesh, vice-president of the Tobacco Barns in Falls Church, Virginia. "I especially like the fact that he dates his pipes. His nomenclature is easily recognizable, clearly understandable. We've successfully carried his pipes for eight or 10 years. And we carry everything: Barling, the Mastercraft lines, Castello, Ashton, Savinelli—we have a terrific inventory of premium pipes. And the Wileys hold their own in that market."

The concept of value is always important to Wiley. "I won't compromise on quality," he says, "but it's equally important that my pipes be affordable. I want people to have these pieces. With some of the big companies, you end up paying for the name—not that they don't produce great pipes, but they could be more reasonably priced."

Indeed, the value of Wiley pipes is legendary in the industry. Joe Moran, owner of Hardwick's in Indianapolis, Indiana, considers Wiley Pipes to be among the best buys on the market. "Randy is one of the few makers who consistently comes through with straight-grain or nearly straight-

The flawless straight-grain on the piano has been set aside for the new Wiley Ovation line. It joins the bulldog next to the lamp, which Wiley has held onto since 1988.

grain briar, and that's apart from almost everybody these days," says Moran. "They've got to be the best value around in an upper end pipe. Anything he makes represents quality that you'd usually have to spend half again as much for."

Marty Pulvers, owner of Sherlock's Haven in San Francisco, agrees. "Wileys are invariably so professionally made that it's always a pleasure to show them. I've never had one misdrilled; I've never had one with file marks on the shank or stem, as I've often seen in much more expensive pipes. No question that Wiley pipes are an incredible value for the money. And Randy enjoys a customer loyalty any pipemaker would like to have."

Given all this praise, it's unfortunate that Wiley produces only 1,500 to 2,000 pipes a year. "I have seen an increase in demand, however, and I'm willing to produce more pipes if there's a boom in the market," he says. The only way he can do that, however, is by working longer hours, since he won't take shortcuts or hire assistants.

Wiley had two assistants the first couple of years of Wiley Pipes. "They were talented guys," says Wiley, "artists in their own right. They each left to pursue their own work, and when they were gone I decided not to replace them. I prefer having full quality control in my own hands."

But an even higher level of quality is coming to Wiley Pipes. Wiley is making plans for offering a new line of super high-grade straight grains: the Ovation line, which he hopes to introduce in 1997. "When a truly extraordinary piece comes along," says Wiley, "I set it aside for additional finishing. I'll hand-sand all the Ovations."

Hand-sanding provides an outstanding finish, even better than his current techniques. "I'm pretty good with the disk sander, but hand-sanding contributes a degree of excellence that can't be matched by machinery. Your eye unconsciously registers even micro-variations in the smoothness of briar—minuscule light refractions that you might not recognize as imperfections. Hand-sanding eliminates that. The Ovations will have an unsurpassed, glass-like finish."

He has several pieces for this line so far, and is very protective of them. Some were photographed for this article, and Wiley couldn't refrain from refinishing them afterwards. "There were a couple of almost imperceptible scratches, from where the pipes sat on the fireplace. 'Almost imperceptible' just isn't good enough; it made me nuts; I had to go over them all again."

In perfect condition once more, they now sit in special boxes in Wiley's office, where no one will touch them again until they are offered for sale. "I'm just looking for someone to produce leather sleeves for them, and I'm not sure how long that will take." Collectors can reassure themselves, however, that these outstanding pipes do exist and will become available.

Also on hold is Wiley's Seven-Day Accumulation Set. This is a one-of-a-kind set, "the only one I'll ever produce," says Wiley. He may consider doing other seven-day sets, but has no wish to repeat the accumulation process. It took seven years to produce, setting aside the finest pieces, replacing them as better pipes came along during the year, until Wiley judged he had the most spectacular pipe from each of seven consecutive years. "It's ready to go," says Wiley, "except I need to have a new presentation box built."

The pipes are currently housed in a beautiful presentation box, made of impressively grained rare woods. "But the top of the box is split," says Wiley. "The wood was so rare that we didn't properly judge its properties. So until I can design a new box, and find someone to build it, I'm not comfortable offering the set for sale. Although," he adds, "if someone were truly interested, I think I'd be motivated to expedite the operation." The price is $10,000. "But to be honest," says Wiley, "I won't mind if it never sells. It's something I'd be proud to pass on to my kids."

Wiley is still working on today's pipe, switching back and forth from grinder to sander. "Check this out," he says. "See the flaws appear and disappear under the grinder?" He's right; no sooner is one sand pit smoothed out than another takes its place. "You never know what's in the wood. You have to judge sometimes whether chasing a flaw is worth the risk of losing the pipe."

He moves over to the sander, and is silent for a long while, concentrating on the task, changing the disk once, and carefully turning the pipe again along the surface of the sandpaper. He stops and applies some stain, "to bring any unevenness to light," and returns to the sander. "Sanding and finishing a pipe takes longer," he says, "than all the other steps put together."

He sands slowly, rhythmically, methodically for 20 minutes, applying a little stain to the burled top, wire brushing it, sanding some more, bending the mouthpiece, restaining and heating the pipe, and sanding still more. Finally he moves to the buffer, examines the result in the sunlight, and goes back to the sander.

"You can fool yourself with artificial light," he says, "but when the sun hits a pipe, it exposes any minuscule flaw. I designed the shop so the polishing and finishing area is right at the door, where I can take advantage of the natural light.

"The finishing of a pipe is profoundly important, because a pipe is literally a work of utilitarian art, a piece of sculpture that people actually interact with, build a relationship with, hold and feel and examine on a daily basis. If there's an imperfection in the finish, they might not notice it when they buy it, or maybe even in the first month that they own it, but eventually they'll recognize it, and their affection for that pipe will be subtly diminished. That's why it's worth the extra time to finish a pipe appropriately."

He finally appears ready to accept his work on this pipe. His face has been quite serious, but after his latest examination he allows himself a smile, and holds the pipe against the polishing wheel, where it begins to glow with the wax finish. He gazes, polishes, stares, polishes, and at last allows the wheel to spin to a stop. He holds the pipe up in the light.

"To me that's what a pipe is all about," he says, turning it one way and another in the sun, "what you see as the finished product. You can't fool yourself; you've got to make the pipe the way you really want the smoker to see it. These people are connoisseurs and they know what they're looking at. I try to bring every one of my pipes to a level satisfying to even the most discriminating collector."

This pipe should certainly accomplish that. The grain curves beautifully along the shape of the bowl, as if it were accommodating the design, instead of the other way around. Its lines are elegant in their simplicity, its finish glossy and perfect.

"Yeah," nods Wiley, and places it in a box with a dozen other finished pipes. He looks down at a giant burlap sack of dull, dirty briar. He pulls out a block and hefts it in his hand. "Yeah." *P&T*

Nomenclature Guide

Wiley Pipes are priced according to grain quality, and are stamped with a number indicating suggested price. Feather spot-carving may appear on any pipe up to #20, but these pipes have grain patterns generally reserved for higher grades. RVWs are not stamped with the Wiley name; all others are.

Nomenclature	Suggested Retail Price
RVW	$50
5	No longer produced.
7	$85
9	$95
11	$110
33	$135
55	$160
77	$210
99	$260
20	$310
70	$410
100	$510

Nomenclature and pricing for the Ovation line have not yet been determined. Ovations will likely be priced by the piece. Contact your local tobacconist for Wiley Pipes. They can be special ordered if they are not normally carried. Retailer inquiries: 813.677.8527.

"I had Randy's seven-day set displayed here not long ago. Jaws hung open, grown men foamed at the mouth and openly wept. Astonishing!"

Oslo's "Stealth" Museum

When is art not art? The answer, at least in Norway, is when the government says so

by Larry O'Connor

A visit to Tiedemanns' museum of tobacco-related memorabilia is a fascinating, yet somehow unsettling, experience.

Housed in the cellar of the Norwegian tobacco company's headquarters in Oslo, the small museum's delightful holdings include antique advertising signs and placards, ashtrays, tobacco scales, figurines and a splendid assortment of pipes. Tiedemanns began collecting at least as far back as the mid-19th century when the Andresen family gained control of the 218-year-old company.

"There are a lot of items that collectors would definitely like to have," says Tiedemanns' Sales and Marketing Director Gisle Tunold. Among the most valuable items are an antique silver ashtray and a series of ceramic ashtrays decorated with birds.

But assessing the value of collectibles is an imprecise business at best. And the history of many of the collection's enchanting artifacts has not been researched, says Tunold. "But value is not only a question of money," he says.

The rarity of some of the holdings makes them treasures, regardless of the sum they would fetch at auction, Tunold says. Some of the museum's advertisements, for example, which tout various brands of cigarettes and pipe tobacco, are the only remaining samples anywhere in the country.

The museum offers visitors an out-

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A replica of an early 16th or 17th century tobacco trade sailing ship and the carving of pipe-smoking men working outside a smokehouse were created for a 1928 Expo.

standing opportunity to experience a slice of the picturesque Scandinavian country's rich history. But there are no visitors. Or very few. And that is what is unsettling.

Norway is renowned not only for its natural beauty, but also its noble defense of human freedoms around the world. However it takes a less libertarian stance toward unfettered free speech. At least when it comes to tobacco-related antiquities.

Although Tiedemanns, or anyone else, is permitted to have a tobacco museum, Norwegian law proscribes telling the public about it.

"We can have a museum and we can show people, if they want to see it," says Tunold. "But to go out and advertise that we have it and to invite people to see it is another thing. In Norway, one is not allowed to communicate in any way so-called 'smoking situations'...If we got a visit from the anti-tobacco council, they might see the advertising posters or other items and tell us 'Don't do that.' And they would say 'please.'"

The end result is that, instead of being promoted by the authorities as a cultural archive, the top-notch museum is forced to operate much like a speakeasy—minus the flappers and secret passwords.

Finding the Tiedemanns museum is nonetheless well worth the effort. Among the many interesting exhibits are two small busts. One is the likeness of a bearded, pipe-smoking Norwegian sea captain, wearing a rain slicker and cap with the slogan "Tiedemanns Tobak Er Dog Bedste"—Tiedemanns tobacco is still the best—emblazoned on its brim. The other is a likeness of Theodore Roosevelt, after whom the Teddy—a once ever-present non-filtered Tiedemanns cigarette brand—was named.

A finely detailed, 70-year-old replica of a 16th or 17th century sailing ship of the sort used in the tobacco trade is also on display. The ship and a carving of two men sitting outside a smokehouse were originally exhibited in a 1928 Expo held in the city of Bergen to celebrate the company's 150th anniversary.

For any pipe lover, of course, the chief draw is the museum's wonderful array of pipes. An engrossing collection of ethnic pipes includes several fine chibouques as well as a large assortment of large and small gourd pipes from various parts of Africa. But the museum's European briar, meerschaum, clay and wood pipes from the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries give a clearer insight into Scandinavia's folk history.

Before the advent of meerschaum and briar, clays were popular in Norway, as in the rest of Europe. And two of the museum's clays, which may well have come from the pipe factories of neighboring Sweden, are particularly well-preserved. Both are about 10 inches long with canted bowls. One sports the classic design of an egg-shaped bowl set in eagle talons. The other is decorated with stars, keys and other patterns, which the museum describes as Masonic symbols.

The museum also has a number of

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Reindeer horn, a Turkish noble with a forked beard, and a hand are some of the many, varied pipes on display. The thumb on the hand covers the tobacco chamber.

porcelain and ceramic pipes, including one 2-foot-long porcelain beauty with a cherrywood stem connected to its horn mouthpiece by several inches of flex-tube. Probably of Danish origin, the pipe has a porcelain shank and bowl base. Its bowl insert is made of nickel. Both the bowl and the stem are upright, a pipe style that originated in Central Europe.

Another pipe, made of staghorn and decorated with a group of reindeer on the bowl, employs the same pipe architecture.

The collection also includes several intricately carved meerschaums, possibly from Vienna. One very artistic pipe is in the likeness of a Turkish noble with a great, forked beard. Another meerschaum—less aesthetic perhaps, but more functional and more typical of the kind used for everyday smoking—has a hefty, tawny-colored, uncarved bowl with a long cherrywood stem. The bowl is tied to its stem and mouthpiece by a bead string with tassels.

As interesting as many of the museum's clays, porcelains and meerschaums are, its wood pipes are more telling of the Norwegian character. The nation has a long history of skilled carpentry and wood carving that dates back to at least the time of the Vikings—800 to 1100 A.D.

The amazingly seaworthy Viking longboats, for example, the sight of which terrified European peoples from the British Isles on down to the Mediterranean coast of France and Italy, and which transported the Vikings clear across the Atlantic to Greenland and North America, are still considered nautical marvels. And Viking themes are appropriately represented in some of the pipes made by Norwegian pipemakers.

One beautiful briar pipe, carved in 1914 for the centennial celebration of the founding of the Norwegian constitution, is in the likeness of a Viking warrior and fitted with a horn mouthpiece.

The bowl of another wood pipe (not briar) has the clever design of a closed fist with a moveable thumb that functions as a lid. From the number of such pipes still surviving, it was apparently a popular design.

As demonstrated by the highly skilled carpentry of the many wooden homes and cabins that dot Norway's landscape, Norwegian woodwork has always emphasized function over form. That love of simplicity may account for the lack of a major pipemaking industry. Many of the nation's pipe smokers through the centuries small, self-sufficient farmers and fishermen in countless settlements scattered along Norway's craggy coast—undoubtedly whittled their own pipes.

One of the museum's least flashy pipes is a simple, unfinished wood (possibly hazel) pipe. The bowl is shaped like that of a modern poker style pipe. Its stem is inserted into a shankless bowl. The wood's bark is left intact to reduce the chance of splitting from heat. But who made it—and where—are forever locked in Norway's past. *P&T*

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The Sol of Oslo

Norwegian tobacconist says harsh anti-tobacco laws have cigarette smokers giving pipes a second look

by Larry O'Connor

The Sol Cigar Company of Oslo, Norway, is not the sort of shop where one lingers for hours swapping stories or discussing politics. But in counterpoint to the noisy stream of taxis, buses and trams whizzing past the shop, there is an aura of tranquility here—an ambience only enhanced by the rich smell of good cigars and pipe tobacco.

The simple, unpretentious pipe and cigar boutique stands on a bustling city street in this Scandinavian capital, a short walk from both the National Theater of Norway and the American Embassy, and just a stone's throw or two from the castle grounds of King Harald V.

Sol (pronounced "sool," rhymes with "cool") is the Norwegian word for "sun." In its heyday, the 85-year-old shop attracted its fair share of Oslo's star politicians, businessmen and theater people. And from all appearances, Sol Cigar remains a thriving business. In addition to its retail operations, the company also serves as an importer/agent for some 300 tobacco shops around the country.

Sales of cigars and RYO (roll-your-own) tobacco far outstrip those of pipe tobacco at Sol Cigar and throughout Norway. But sales associate Bjorn Glorstad says pipe and pipe tobacco sales seem to be on the upswing, with the shop selling a respectable average of about eight pipes a day.

Sol Cigar's walls, shelves and display cases are lined with a good selection of pipes. Customers have ample choices of Dunhills, Comoys, GDBs and other major manufacturers, although there is a paucity of Italians. Norwegian tastes generally run more toward Danish pipes, says Glorstad.

Stanwells are the most popular choice of the shop's customers, followed by Nordings. The shop also sells a fair number of Lillehammer pipes. Lillehammer was the site of the 1994 Winter Olympics and the trade name of the last of the Nor-

Pipe tobacco runs about 65 crown (about $10) for a 50-gram package, four times U.S. prices. Cigarette prices are $7.50 a pack.

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Bjorn Glorstad sees pipe sales on the upswing with younger buyers, although women still prefer easily-hidden pipes.

wegian-made pipes. The company that made them bowed to high Norwegian production costs and was sold, first to a German company, and later to Stanwell, Glorstad says. They are now manufactured in Denmark, he says.

The cigar craze, which has enveloped the United States for five years, hit with a vengeance in Norway just in the last year, particularly around New Year's, says Glorstad. A number of cigar clubs have been started. And, predictably, the biggest demand is for stogies from the Fiefdom of Fidel. "Everybody wants hand-rolled cigars from Cuba," says Glorstad.

But interest in pipe smoking, particularly among younger smokers, has also increased, says Glorstad. The average pipe customer at Sol Cigar is a former cigarette smoker in his 30s who buys a Stanwell pipe in the 400-crown to 650-crown price range (about $60 to $100.) In the past, pipe buyers tended to be almost uniformly middle-aged or older, he says.

Prices range from about $7 for a basic Missouri Meerschaum corncob to $15 for a lower-quality briar and on up to several hundred dollars for a top-drawer briar.

The shop generally recommends a moderately priced straight pipe for new pipe smokers. "We think it's easier for them to be successful with a straight pipe. Then they can come back in a month or so and try another kind if they want," Glorstad says.

Norway may also be seeing more female pipe smokers. Pipes were the rage among many fashionable young Danish women in the 1970s, but female pipe smoking never extended north to Sweden or Norway in a significant way. And smoking a pipe is still not considered quite proper for a woman. "So they often buy a small pipe that they can hide in their hand," he says.

Glorstad, a typically blond Scandinavian, believes that the upswing in pipe smoking is directly related to the increasingly hard-line attitude of the Norwegian government toward tobacco. Norway long ago outlawed any form of tobacco advertising, and in January of this year anti-smoking laws that many smokers see as draconian went into effect.

Smoking is now totally prohibited in many workplaces, even outside. And smoking has similarly been nixed from bars and restaurants that adjoin areas used for other purposes. But the ban on smoking in cafes is perhaps the cruelest cut of all in a country where enjoying a hand-rolled cigarette, cigar or pipe, and a cup of stout coffee has been almost a national pastime. "The cafe ordinance really ticked people off," says Glorstad.

One group of smokers responded by establishing a smokers-only bar in downtown Oslo that posts the warning: "Non-smokers enter at their own risk."

The anti-smoking legislation and a deluge of what Glorstad calls "government propaganda" has apparently failed to deter many smokers. The immediate effect of the latest round of laws was an upwards spike in the sales of smokeless tobacco. For the first quarter of 1996, snuff sales were at a 25-year high. Since then, however, snuff sales have returned to their former level.

But if Norwegians are not giving up tobacco en masse, some are making the switch to pipes to avoid harassment. "Some people are saying, 'I won't quit smoking, but maybe I'll try a pipe.' And then they enjoy their pipe in the evening at home," Glorstad says.

Another factor in the switch to pipes is undoubtedly the high tobacco taxes levied on smokers, particularly cigarette smokers. Custom blending is generally not available at tobacconists in Norway. But Sol Cigar offers a variety of manufacturer-blended pipe tobaccos, including several each by two Danish producers—Orlick and W.O. Larsen. They are pricey, however.

And so are economy brands. The price, for example, of a 50-gram (1.75 ounces) package of Borkum Riff Whiskey—the shop's biggest seller is 65 crowns, about $10, roughly four times the American price.

But the price of cigarettes—47 crowns (about $7.50) for a pack of standard smokes—is even more brutal. "And if you go out to a restaurant or nightclub for a beer, and you run out, you'll pay a lot more," he says. *P&T*

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Pack a Bowl Properly

Chopping tobacco and using a gravity feed method to pack a bowl can lead to greater smoking pleasure

by Mike Butera

For our first "how to..." column, editor Dayton H. Matlick visited with Mike Butera, of Butera Pipe Company. Butera is well-known both as a maker of fine pipes and for his Esoterica and Royal Vintage lines of pipe tobaccos. Butera discusses his own personal views about packing, lighting and smoking a bowl of tobacco. P&T *recognizes there are many ways to approach the same problem. We encourage readers with questions, and more experienced smokers with solutions to some of the many problems that arise, to correspond with us. This is your column in which we will strive to deal with your interests and concerns.*

I like to start off new pipe smokers—or experienced pipe smokers trying a new cut—by having them chop their tobacco. To get an enjoyable smoke, you need to learn how to pack a pipe with your chosen tobacco. And chopping tobacco is the fastest, easiest way to move right to enjoyable smoking experiences.

Most new smokers probably become discouraged because of tongue bite. Tongue bite is at least partially caused by packing your pipe too loosely or too tightly.

I promise you can pack your bowl just right if you chop your tobacco. And I mean to literally chop it with a knife to the point you can grab a pinch of tobacco and gravity feed your pipe. In other words, you simply drop the tobacco into the bowl, and it falls directly to the bottom.

I use a wooden cutting board to chop my tobacco. I take a whole can of tobacco and grab a large cutting knife. Normally I take a medium handful of tobacco, squeeze it together tightly and then cut it quickly. Chop it up until you get the size of pieces you can gravity feed easily into your pipe, roughly one-fourth inch. You don't ever want to be in the situation where you feel you have to stuff the tobacco into the bowl by force.

After you chop your tobacco, toss it a little bit so that the different tobaccos in your blend become distributed in proper proportions. That way, when you light your pipe, you will get the full impact of the way the blend is supposed to taste.

You will begin to get the feel of "proper packing" your pipe the very first time you gravity feed with chopped tobacco. Now that your tobacco is chopped, first fill the pipe bowl to the top by gravity feeding only. Now press the tobacco half way down into the bowl using your finger or a tamper. This will teach you to avoid packing the tobacco too tight at the bottom of the bowl. Then gravity feed it to the top again; press it down to about a quarter of an inch from the top. Gravity feed it again a little above the top of the bowl and tamp it down tight, even with the top of the bowl.

I wish we could buy tobacco already chopped. But not everybody likes chopped tobacco because sometimes little pieces of tobacco will come through onto your tongue from the first pull or two on a fresh bowl of tobacco. But that is a small price to pay for the added pleasure.

Once the tobacco gets moist and begins to swell, it stays together. You're building moisture at the bottom and the tobacco pieces will stay there. But you may have to wipe your tongue off the first few times you pull on the pipe.

You will be surprised how delicious the pipe tobacco tastes because you get the full impact of the total blend from the first draw. A ribbon cut tobacco, for example, may consist of Turkish Oriental, Latakia and Virginia. The first pinch you grab from a fresh can of tobacco may be mainly Virginia or possibly one of the other tobaccos in the blend. Smoking a bowl of tobacco this way will not be representative of the total blend at all.

Using this system, you will progress toward enjoyable smoking much more quickly than the couple of months of trial and error usually necessary before you finally understand the feel of the unchopped version.

A major benefit of this system is that it will teach you not to pack the bowl too tightly; too tight can cause tongue bite. With a tightly packed bowl, you tend to pull too hard, which in turn creates a high concentration of hot, moist smoke. This steam (not the tobacco) directly hitting the tongue is what causes bite. The same steam problem comes from tobacco packed too loosely.

When you have your pipe properly packed, the next task is to light it.

If you haven't packed it properly, whether you are a new smoker or an experienced smoker who isn't familiar with a particular cut of tobacco, it isn't unusual to

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pull on your lighter 15 or 16 times just to light the surface of your tobacco. You've completely destroyed your tongue by then.

If you chop your tobacco, it's going to light quickly. You should never take more than 10 pulls on your lighter for the first light, whether you light one speck of tobacco or the whole surface. Give it a rest if it takes more than that.

The chopped tobacco will rise up a bit when you light it that first time. Then tamp whatever ash you managed to burn. Tamp only the ash; do not push the tobacco down.

The second time, pull five times on your lighter and then tamp just the ash again. With the third light, you should only have to pull two or three times to light the whole surface.

Every tobacco out there I have tested can be fully lit using this technique. Ten times, tamp; five times, tamp; three times, tamp; and you're evenly lit.

And don't be afraid to tamp and relight throughout the whole smoke.

Some pipe smokers believe that you should only have to light your pipe once, get a good surface light and be able to smoke it all the way down. That's too much work. Because of uneven burning, it's too hard to do.

Tamp and relight frequently. When you get half way down that bowl, stir up the ash a little bit, and dump some of the ash. Leave enough ash to cover the surface when you retamp, so that when you relight it grabs the edge rather than the center of the tobacco.

The flame burns in a V down the center. Tamp the tobacco and ash firmly out to the wall. The remaining ash will move toward the center, where it will block the flame. This will leave the tobacco exposed to the flame only around the edge of the bowl. If you use this approach and relight throughout the whole smoke, it's only going to take three pulls on your lighter and you're fully lit again.

The goal is to light that edge. You don't want to get yourself into a situation where you've dumped all your ash out and you're trying to light all the tobacco. If you do, the flame is going to go straight to the center of that tobacco where the last burn was. That's where it's going to ignite. As a result, you're going to pull and bite your tongue instantly. For this reason, leave enough ash in the center so that when you light the tobacco, the flame can only go to the edge to find something to burn—and that's where your unburned tobacco is.

And use pipe cleaners throughout the whole process.

I use a pipe cleaner and then throw it away. I never use pipe cleaners a second time. I use five to eight pipe cleaners with a regular-sized pipe bowl while I'm smoking it, plus one when I'm through.

You want to eliminate as much moisture as possible. A used pipe cleaner will not eliminate all of the moisture. Removing the moisture will result in a cool, clean smoke. If you use a lot of pipe cleaners, the taste will never turn bitter on you toward the bottom of the bowl. The bitterness comes when you have allowed the tobacco at the bottom of the bowl to accumulate too much moisture. Eliminate the moisture and it'll smoke clean and cool all the way to the bottom.

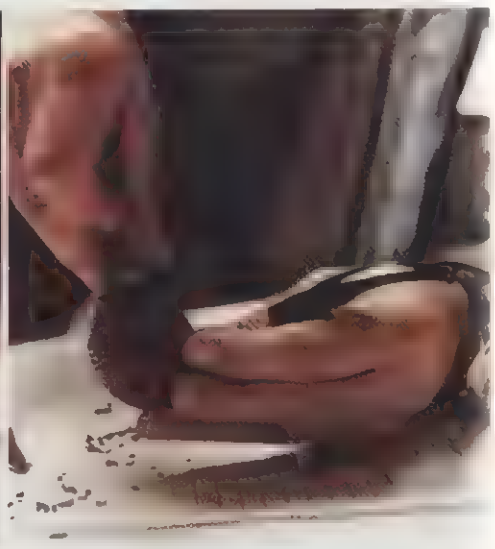
When I get to the bottom of the bowl, I take my pick and turn the remaining ash. Then I put the palm of my hand over the top of the bowl and shake it well. This will cover the inside of the bowl surface with a fine layer of ash, which promotes a hard, even cake. Dump any remaining ash.

I smoke the devil out of my pipes, but I make sure each bowl is packed properly, I tamp and relight regularly and use lots of pipe cleaners. This allow me to smoke the same pipe 30 minutes later. You can smoke one pipe all day long. I've taken the same pipe sometimes three or four days because I've used lots of pipe cleaners and I shake the ash and let it set for an hour or two before I smoke another bowl. Three, four or five bowls a day, three days in a row and I don't sour my pipes, ever. And I very seldom have to ream them.

As for reaming, I don't like to ream pipes very much. I might ream my pipes once a year and I may smoke them daily. It depends on your smoking characteristics, the method that you use to smoke a pipe. I use a tamper and I tamp all the way to the sides of the wall, so I have very little cake build up.

I've seen smokers—and this is the way they enjoy their pipes—who don't use a tamper. They'll use their finger instead. If the finger is used when a bowl of tobacco is smoked, parts of the tobacco will stick to the wall. The cake will build a lot faster that way, but it will have many air pockets in it. In that case, you have to ream them from time to time because the cake builds so fast.

But if you tamp your pipe all the way to the sides as you're smoking, you're



Mike Butera is a great believer in the value of chopping tobacco and the gravity feed method of filling a pipe.

going to build a nice tight cake without air holes in it and you will only have to ream your pipe maybe once a year.

By tamping constantly, I have not allowed any of the unburned tobacco to stick to the side of the wall. The smoke—the tars and nicotine and oils—coats the wall, but no tobacco is left on the side. When I get to the bottom and shake up the ash, the ash adheres only to the side of the wall where it comes in contact with the oils and the tars. This creates a nice hard and even cake. I find it much more pleasurable to smoke a pipe like that. It smokes the tobacco cleaner and much more evenly.

How many pipes should someone own? I don't base the number of pipes you should own on how frequently you want to smoke. Instead, get at least one pipe that you like real well for every type of tobacco you smoke. Let's say you enjoy smoking an aromatic, an English-style Latakia blend and a Virginia. In my opinion, you only need three pipes. None of us ever want to own just three pipes, but three pipes will do the job in this instance. The secret is, never mix the types of tobaccos you smoke in any given pipe. Have a different pipe for each style of tobacco you smoke.

Never mix and match. One style of tobacco will hurt the taste characteristic of another. I use one set of pipes for my English-style tobaccos, another three or four pipes in which I smoke only Virginias, and another set of pipes in which I smoke only aromatics.

The style of tobacco I smoke often depends on the time of the year and my mood. If I have been smoking Virginias and I decide to try Latakia today, I usually ask myself, why have I been smoking Virginias for so long? This is so good! And for three or four months I'll stay on Latakia. Then I'll pick up an aromatic and I'll do the same thing. "By gosh, I've missed this so much."

It just depends. Usually during the colder months of the year I like the English styles better, and during the rest of the year I'll smoke Virginias and aromatics.

One thing I see people do when they finish smoking a bowl of tobacco is to insert a pipe cleaner and let it hang, or put the pipe away with a cleaner in it. That's something I tell all of my friends never to do. The pipe cleaner will absorb the moisture. But remember that the moisture is present throughout the pipe. So when you shove that pipe cleaner into the pipe and leave it there, you're basically locking the moisture into the pipe. If you leave it there, you've defeated the original purpose of the pipe cleaner—taking the moisture out.

By locking the moisture in, it is going to take a lot longer for the pipe to dry out. In addition, the tars and nicotine you want to eliminate are going to be absorbed by the briar. They are going to stick to the walls of your air holes in the shank. After a day, or three or four days, when you pull that pipe out, you'll find you didn't remove anything. True, there will be some material on the pipe cleaner. But you've shared that unwanted material with the briar as well.

The pipe will dry out a lot faster if you take the pipe cleaner out and set the pipe down for a while.

Once you learn how to pack your pipe by gravity feeding and do it enough times, it's going to become "normal." But, you don't have to chop your tobacco for the rest of your life. The feel is the main thing that I want you to experience. I want you to feel it and I want you to see how it lights. Then, once you're familiar with the gravity-feed method, try your ribbons without cutting them. You may not like the way it works the first time, but the right technique will come to you much quicker. *P&T*

PIPE INFO

Large Heart-shaped Dunhill

I am interested in background information on two Dunhill pipes.

The first is a presmoked pipe—a heart-shaped piece with Collector XL001 stamped on the shank, with a gold band. It appears to be from 1978.

The other pipe is an unsmoked Root Briar shape 56 from 1974. What can you tell me about these pipes?

George Lockwood
Birmingham, Michigan

Each Dunhill Collector is a unique, handmade pipe. It usually features a beautiful grain and is not one of Dunhill's standard shapes.

Although stamped XL, they vary in size greatly. Larger pieces, some up to four inches in height, are considerably more valuable than smaller pieces.

Dunhills, probably more so than with any other brand, have many intangible factors one must consider when determining their value. These include condition of the bowl, nomenclature, rarity of a given shape or model, age and size.

With this particular pipe, if the gold band is not marked A.D. or Dunhill there should be no additional value to the pipe, even though the gold has value all by itself. If anything, it may take some of the "collector value" away from the pipe. Many Dunhill collectors want their pipes to be as close to their original form as possible.

Conversely, if it is an original Dunhill gold band, the additional value to the pipe will exceed the value of the gold.

Some pipes are treasured for their "collector value," while others are appreciated strictly for their aesthetic appeal and smoking quality. The individual pipe smoker must determine what he or she wants out of a pipe.

The 1974 Root Briar 56 is an unusual piece in that it has remained unsmoked for 22 years. The Root Briar is no longer produced and remains one of the most popular pipes of all time.

Nikos M. Levin
West Palm Beach, Florida

(Editor's Note: Welcome to the first "Pipe Info" column. Guest columnist Nikos M. Levin is well-known throughout the pipe industry for his knowledge of pipe companies and pipes, both new and presmoked. Levin will answer questions on pipe background and history during the calendar year 1997. In 1998, we will rotate the column to one of the many other highly qualified U.S. experts.

The primary purpose of this column is to provide background information on specific pipes and pipe manufacturers for P&T *readers. It is not a pricing column. Prices will be given only when absolutely necessary to properly answer the questions and then only in very general terms.*

Send your pipe questions to: Pipes and tobaccos, *Dept. Pipe Info, 3000 Highwoods Blvd., Suite 300, Raleigh, NC 27604-1029, or fax to the same address at 919.876.6531.)*

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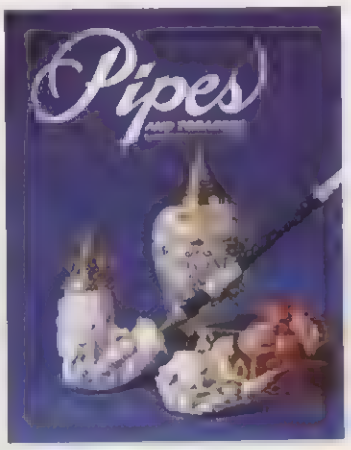

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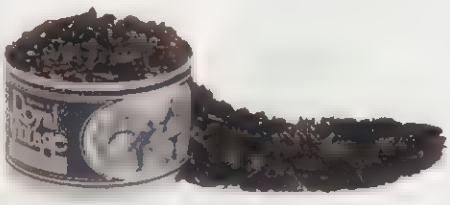

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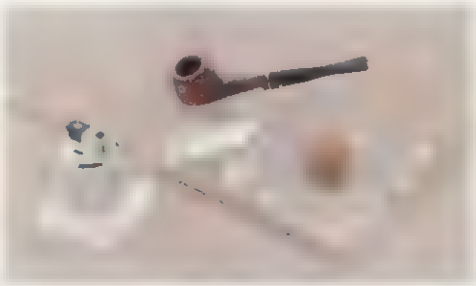

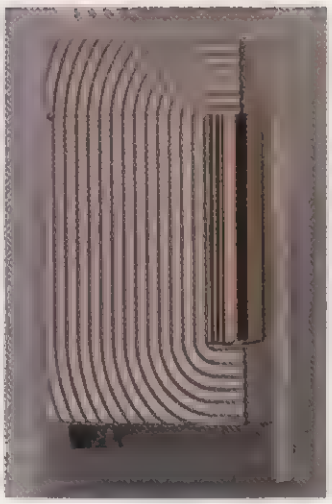

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Pouch Panache

Tobacco pouches are the right containers for your daily ration

by Larry O'Connor

Among the most prized possessions of homesick, battle-weary soldiers of the American Civil War were their fancy cloth tobacco pouches. Sent by wives and sweethearts back home and often embroidered with a soldier's name, the names of the battles in which he fought or a flag, the handmade cotton satchels were a sentimental reminder of happier days before the war.

With long drawstrings, Civil War pouches resembled some of today's styles in women's purses. But for a soldier on the move they were an ideal way to carry tobacco.

Whether sitting around a campfire trying to digest the latest gourmet ration of hardtack and beans or marching through mosquito-infested swamps of the Old South, a soldier knew the solace of his pipe tobacco was no farther away than his trusty pouch.

Those simple Civil War era satchels were among the earliest forerunners of the modern tobacco pouch, which most well-appointed pipe smokers now consider an indispensable accessory. As obvious as the concept of a soft, flexible container for a day's supply of tobacco is today, pouches are a relatively modern invention. Until the 19th century, most smokers carried their daily ration in small brass or wooden boxes.

Embroidered or beaded tobacco pouches clearly would have been more comfortable to carry than a metal box. But cotton pouches have a major drawback. The fabric is so porous that tobacco stored in it goes dry within hours.

Curiously, it wasn't until this century that manufacturers—and smokers themselves—saw that as a problem. When they did become aware of the importance of humidity to smoking tobacco, cloth pouches began giving way, first to leather and oilskin pouches, and then to rubber- or plastic-lined cloth, canvas and leather pouches.

Today's tobacco pouches come in two basic designs: a zippered pouch and one with a fold-over flap. Some pouches come with compartments for pipe tools and cleaners, matches or lighter, and even the pipe. A good leather pouch will normally be more expensive than cloth. The elegance of the design will also affect the price.

Some smokers make do with the simplest of plastic pouches. Or even a Ziploc baggie. But the few dollars spent on an attractive pouch, which will give years of service, seem a small price for overall enhancement of the smoking experience.

While the decision on how elaborate a pouch one should buy is very much a matter of personal taste, there are several caveats worth considering. (1) Price is not always the clearest measure of quality. (2) A very elaborate pouch that will please some users to no end will prove to be a royal pain in the pocket for others.

It is important to realize that most pouches are not airtight and thus not suitable for long-term storage. Users should pack only what they might reasonably expect to smoke in a day, and perhaps a little extra for good measure.

At the end of the day, any remaining tobacco should be transferred to a humidor or other airtight container. As with humidors, a moisturizing disc sold at most tobacconist shops can be placed in the pouch to help keep tobacco moist. ***P&T***

Jefferson Davis' fancy tobacco pouch was handmade by his wife, Varina Howell Davis. About three-and-a-half inches in diameter, the Confederate president's pouch is housed along with other Civil War memorabilia at the Confederate Museum in New Orleans.

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Above, left:
English leather pouch with snaps by James B. Russell ($17.95).

Above:
Vinyl combo pouch with zippers and snaps by F.G.T. Enterprises ($11.90).

Left:
Leather tri-fold, double pouch with snaps and zippers by Dunhill ($185).

Dark Air-Cured

There are two things you can't hide in western Kentucky: honest living and an unhurried job of growing and curing dark air-cured tobacco

by Cecil H. Yancy Jr.

Standing beneath a wild cherry tree, James Herman Rafferty of Owensboro, Kentucky, looks beyond the light-colored leaves of his burley tobacco crop to his small patch of dark air-cured tobacco. Much like a grandfather seeing his past, present and legacy before him, Rafferty tells me about the almost black tobacco that has shaped his life as well as the life of Kentucky.

Grown primarily in the western-central section of Kentucky, dark air-cured tobacco has a storied past and a growing future in moist snuff products and pipe tobacco blends. On the books at the United States Department of Agriculture as Type 36 Green River Dark Air-Cured Tobacco, this tobacco requires hands-on experience in the field and delicate handling at harvest and sale. The long hours of hoeing, cultivation, slow growth, harvest and curing pay off through premium prices for this specialty tobacco.

Rafferty grows dark air-cured much the same way his father, grandfather and great-grandfather did. He and his son, Samuel, continue the tradition in Owensboro, growing an acre and a half of the black leaf. Although he raises 35,000 pounds of burley tobacco each year, it is the dark tobacco that more than pulls its weight on the farm.

"There's not near as much dark air-cured tobacco grown in Kentucky as there used to be 50 or 60 years ago," says Rafferty, who over the years has "swapped" dark tobacco acreage for burley. Despite the decline in acreage, dark air-cured requires long hours of labor-intensive work.

"Yes sir, this is a hands-on kind of crop," says Rafferty. "You need to watch and look after it all the time and baby it along to come out with a good crop."

Rafferty and his son start the process in early spring, planting seeds in raised beds. From those seeds spring the plants with a trademark dark color. The plants are then pulled by hand and transplanted from May 15 up until June 10, depending on the weather.

Once the crop is in the ground, it requires exacting attention to detail to bring it to maturity.

"Dark tobacco is a little different than growing burley," says Rafferty, holding an 18-inch leaf of dark tobacco he judges to be about three weeks from harvest. "Generally, it's best to cultivate it a little more and also don't fertilize quite as heavy as other types of tobaccos." In burley and flue-cured fields, by contrast, fertilization is recommended, if not somewhat overdone.

The added cultivation prunes the roots of the plants and the lighter applications of fertilizer bring the tobacco plants along at a slow-hand pace, says Bill Maksymowicz, a University of Kentucky agronomist who works with dark tobacco producers.

"You try to make it grow slow," says Rafferty, motioning with his hands. Even then, there's unwanted growth. In tobacco, there's almost a sucker born every minute, to use a P.T. Barnum expression.

Suckers grow between the stalk and the base of the leaf, robbing the leaf of vital nutrients. The process of removing the suckers is called "suckering" and must be done on a timely basis to allow the leaves to develop fully and properly. Rafferty does use chemicals on occasion to deal with the suckers, but most of the time he gets out in the field and breaks off the extra growth by hand. "The way I feel about it, anything that will kill something will likely stunt the growth of the tobacco," he says. "It's a small point, but one that shows up at auction time."

With timely cultivation of the middles of the rows, Rafferty keeps a check on weeds. More often than not, however, the fields will still need "hoeing." There are few weeds that can withstand chopping from a sharp hoe. Except in a rainy year.

"Several years ago, I had a man working for me who was hoeing the tobacco in a rainy year," recalls Rafferty. "He'd go out there and chop all this crabgrass out of the middles because it was too wet to get in there with a tractor. It wouldn't die. Come the rain, the crabgrass would grow back again and the man had to return to

Dark air-cured tobacco, shown in the foreground, ripens later than the burley tobacco, ready for harvest in the background.

the field with his hoe. The third time, he got a wheelbarrow and started pushing the crabgrass out in a wheelbarrow and dumping it at the end of the row," he chuckles.

Determining the right time to harvest is as much art and experience as it is science. "See those yellow specks? It won't be long before harvest," says Rafferty.

If the job up until now has been labor-intensive, it now becomes even more so.

"You have to keep all the dirt off the leaves. And don't let it get rained on after it's cut. If you do, you're not going to get paid much," says Rafferty. Discolorations, as well as holes made by insects in the leaf, aren't welcomed either.

While the harvest of other types of tobaccos begins as soon as the dew dries and continues throughout the day, dark tobacco is at its best in the late afternoon. Workers cut the tobacco at ground level with a machete. The tobacco is either left in a pile until it "wilts down" or individual stalks may be "spiked" on a metal cylinder that sits atop a piece of wood. The spiked tobacco creates a "rick."

After the dew dries off the following morning, Rafferty and his crew take the tobacco to be hung in the same barn where burley was cured just over a month before. Opened boards on the side of the black barn allow air to circulate among the many ricks of tobacco hanging from rafters. A tin roof holds in the humidity that cures the tobacco. The process of curing takes about six weeks to complete, creating the desired moisture level and dark color.

Little has changed from the time Rafferty grew his first crop of dark tobacco some 60 years ago. Once the tobacco is "cured," workers strip the individual leaves off the stalk, separating them into three or four grades.

Grading tobacco is a careful process that requires the Raffertys to discriminate among the several leaf qualities that grew on the same stalk. There is no way to hide a poor job of growing once the tobacco is off the stalk.

Rafferty wraps a single tobacco leaf around about 25 other leaves of like quality at the top of the tobacco stem. Similar to tying a necktie, Rafferty tucks the tie leaf inside the center of the knot he has created around the other leaves. It is this presentation he will take to the market in Owensboro for twice- to thrice-weekly sales.

"You can handle burley pretty rough and still come out with the same price," says Rafferty. "With dark air-cured it has to be in the basket neat, straight and pressed. It makes quite a difference in price."

What defines quality in dark air-cured tobacco hasn't changed a whole lot in the last 50 or 60 years. A leaf with plenty of body and length, cured correctly, fetches top price every time.

"What we call quality you can pretty much put your finger on and say, 'This is quality tobacco,'" says Maksymowicz, the tobacco agronomist. "And a premium will be paid for that quality."

Dark air-cured tobacco regularly brings as much as 50 cents per pound above the support price, fetching $2.40 a pound at auction. In contrast, burley brings around $1.60 a pound.

To get the premium price, the farmer often has to walk a tightrope between sweating the tobacco to death and curing it correctly. "You're walking a fine line to get the humidity just right to bring out that brown to reddish-brown color that's desired," says Maksymowicz.

The curing process is the final step in producing this "less than forgiving tobacco," says Maksymowicz. "It's less forgiving when you cut it, less forgiving when you put it in the barn and less forgiving when you take it to market."

Rafferty, however, seems to be at home in this "less than forgiving" environment. He has been plowing, curing and selling dark air-cured tobacco since he was nine years old. "My grandfather

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James Rafferty, son Sam and helpers work to get the burley crop harvested and cured before the dark air-cured crop follows along behind. In comparison, the dark air-cured tobacco requires much greater care and attention in both harvest techniques and curing.

helped me on my first piece of tobacco ground," he says. "We cleared it and set it by hand, planting around the stumps."

In his younger days, the now 69-year-old Rafferty worked the cash crop with mules. A missing finger on his left hand still reminds him of those days. His finger got caught in the bridle as he was hitching up the mule to plow.

In a much-treasured photo album are pictures of his tobacco-growing ancestors in the dark tobacco fields. A pipe smoking great-great-grandfather lived to be 106 years old. A great-grandfather lived to be almost 100 years old. Albert Einstein once theorized that if one could catch up to the speed of light, time would stand still. This is the case in dark air-cured tobacco.

Today, Rafferty and his son carry on the tradition as the fifth and sixth generations on the farm. Standing beside the black barn this day, they are bathed in the humidity of early August, but clothed in the pride of workmanship.

"It's such a family-oriented thing," says Pem Clark, executive director of the Stemming District Association in Henderson, Kentucky, the group that administers the price support program for dark air-cured tobacco farmers. "You've got families: husband, wife, cousins, nephews working to get the crop in. Farmers raise their children, pay church tithes and mortgages with money made from tobacco."

Top prices for quality leaf, as well as growing moist snuff and pipe tobacco markets, will keep this tobacco on the farm. Not to mention James Herman Rafferty and his son Samuel. ***P&T***

Black Patch Wars

When you hear a tobacco farmer these days talking about fighting for his crop, it's largely rhetorical. For folks at the turn of the century, words turned into an outright war against the powerful Duke Tobacco Trust and any farmers suspected of selling their tobacco to the company that controlled more than 80 percent of the smoking and chewing market. The violence became known as the "Black Patch Wars," named after the dark tobacco that grows in western Kentucky and Tennessee.

As the Duke Trust grew larger by gobbling up small tobacco manufacturing companies, the prices farmers received for their crop declined from a high of 12 cents a pound to a low of 1 cent a pound. It is estimated that American Tobacco Company, the trade name of the Trust, "robbed" farmers of more than $5 million on their 1904 crop alone.

It was more than many farmers could take. David Amoss of Caldwell County, Kentucky, emerged as the leader of the group known as the Dark Tobacco District Planters Protection Association of Kentucky and Tennessee. Amoss created the culture of the Association through a mixture of Masonic and Ku Klux Klan rituals. They did their work at night, wearing black masks to conceal their identity, and garnered the infamous name, "Night Riders."

In their overzealous quest to influence tobacco prices upward, the Night Riders whipped farmers who refused to join their association, beat up young women and children, dynamited farm machines. The threatening letter farmer Henry Pace of Kirksey, Kentucky, received was typical: "If you deliver tobacco outside the Association, ... we will get you and your barns for we are tired of being fooled with by you and your kind! Night Riders."

Although 70 percent of the farmers joined the Association, it had little effect on tobacco prices at the warehouse. Even when the Association started in 1904, there was opposition to it. By 1908, the authorities had had enough. The government even thought about calling out the military to squelch the terror. Lawsuits were brought against the Association and its members.

In the end, American Tobacco Co. was found to be in violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act. American Tobacco Co., Liggett and Myers, Lorillard and R.J. Reynolds emerged from the breakup. And the Night Riders rode into infamous history, a dark story even today in the Black Patch.

For further reading, I recommend "On Bended Knees, The Night Rider Story," by Bill Cunningham. It was published in 1983 by McClanahan Publishing House, Nashville, Tennessee. Cunningham is a judge in Lyon County, Kentucky.—*C.V.*

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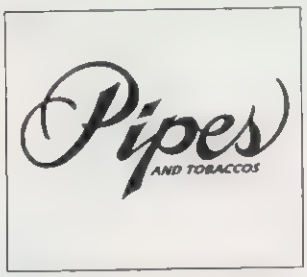
3 

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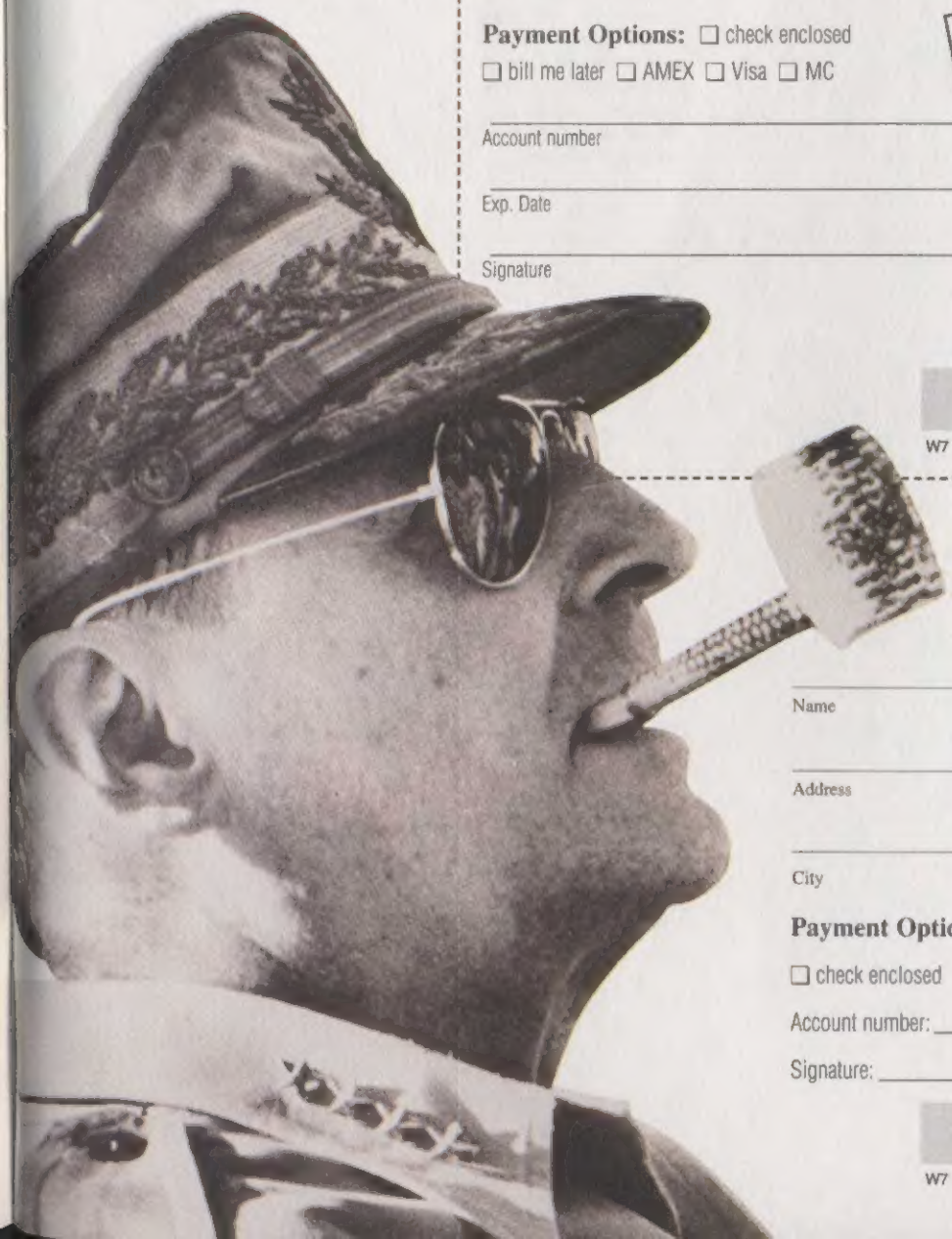

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